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Beginning primary teachers' perspectives on becoming a teacher in the workplace: Contextual, emotional, and temporo-spatial dimensions of identity shaping

Daniel O'Sullivan

Thesis presented in fulfilment of the regulations governing the award of the degree of Ph.D.

Supervised by Dr Paul Conway
Head of School: Professor Kathy Hall

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January 2014

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Philosophy, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed:

ID No.: 78701619

Date:

Abstract

Context: The issue, with international and national overtones, of direct relevance to this study, relates to the shaping of beginning teachers' identities in the workplace. Each year, approximately two thousand newly qualified primary teachers graduate from a range of initial teacher education programmes in the Republic of Ireland (Hyland 2012, p.14). Possessing the potential to deepen learning that has already taken place in initial teacher education, as well as preparing the beginning teacher for continuing professional development, the first year of teaching, post-graduation, represents a crucial juncture in the continuum of teacher education.

Focus: As the shift from the environment of an initial teacher education programme into initial practice in schools is a period of identity change worthy of investigation, this study focuses on the transformative search by nine beginning primary teachers for their teaching identities, throughout the course of their initial year of occupational experience, post-graduation. Privileging 'insider' perspectives, the research goal is to understand the complexities of lived experience from the viewpoints of the participating beginning teacher informants. In doing so, this study seeks to contribute to an understanding of a crucial, yet under-researched, area of Irish school life.

Participants: In selecting nine beginning teacher research participants from among a cohort of approximately thirty volunteers, overriding considerations related to feasibility, manageability and the vagaries of the beginning teacher employment market. Ultimately, the research undertaking included beginning teachers who worked in a variety of primary school settings: single gender, mixed gender, socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged, urban and rural. Thus, the selection of 'maximum variation cases' (Flyvbjerg 2006, p.230) reveals more information because more actors and more basic mechanisms are activated in the situations studied. As a consequence, the degree to which the research cohort can be considered to be representative is strengthened.

Methodology: Adapting McNally et al. (2010), the shaping of identity is conceived of in dimensional terms. Accordingly, a framework composed of three dimensions of beginning teacher experience is devised, namely: contextual; emotional; temporo-spatial. Data collection and analysis is informed by principles derived from sociocultural theories; activity theory; figured worlds theory; and, dialogical self theory. As each derives from the cultural-historical tradition, these theories are synergistic, and, utilised together, provide a richer view of the shaping of beginning teacher identity than either could offer in isolation. Subscribing to a need for methodological rigor, in researching the shaping of beginning identity over time [one school-year], and across contexts [nine beginning teachers, in nine varied workplace settings], a multiple-case study research design is employed. Individual, face-to-face semi-structured interviews, and the maintenance of solicited digital diaries (or e-mail logs) by research participants, were the principal methods of data collection employed. In the case of each beginning teacher, a three-cycle, multi-phase interview design facilitated continuing contact with participants throughout their first year of occupational experience, post-graduation. Additionally, throughout their beginning year of practice, participants submitted one digital diary entry every three weeks to the e-mail account of the researcher.

Claims: The use of a dimensional model fragments the integrated learning experiences of beginning teachers into constituent parts for the purpose of analysis: contextuality; emotionality; temporo-spatiality. It is acknowledged that the actual journey articulated by each beginning teacher participant is a more complex whole than the sum of its parts.

Key empirically-based claims are presented as per the dimensional framework employed:

Contextuality: Among participants, a significant degree of variability characterises the decision to teach; perceptions of the 'good teacher' as empathetic 'facilitator' feature most commonly in perceptions of early teacher role models; probationary-related performativity short-circuits the range of learning affordances potentially available to beginners, with manifestly 'positional', hierarchical and status-related considerations, significantly influencing the conceptualisation and transaction of mentoring practices.

Emotionality: School leadership is particularly influential in determining the emotional nature of beginning to teach; while prevailing individualistic school cultures ensure limited and sporadic collaborative practice, beginners, motivated to forge their own reputations as teachers, frequently prefer to determine the degree and nature of their engagements with colleagues; the regulation of emotions or emotional labour are important issues in the first year; tentatively suggestive of the possibility of different emotional identities related to teaching that result in different concerns and intensities of emotions and feelings, interacting with pupils at classroom level trigger emotions related to an ethic of care, whereas engagement at a more systemic level activates emotions related to the profession of teaching; a principal source of the emotionality characterising the beginning year lay outside the school with two, primarily evaluative, probationary-related visits, shaping the emotional tone of the beginning year to a significant extent.

Temporo-spatiality: Participants' end-of-year retrospective reflections reveal the patterned nature of nominated significant experiences or key episodes; the challenge for beginners not only concerns the transition into and management of the classroom environment but also the negotiation of the micropolitical complexity of a school's organisational landscape, particularly with respect to coping with the fragmentations and frustrations of organisational life; beginners simultaneously grapple with the core components of the teaching design cycle, manifesting both sophisticated and disjointed qualities in varying degrees, and a tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty; the passage of time is experienced in many different and paradoxical ways.

Significance: Researching the shaping of beginning teacher identity contributes to a robust theory of early professional learning in teaching, is a necessary prerequisite to effecting evidence-based improvements to initial teacher education programmes, and helps foster the development of facilitative, yet reflective and interrogative, school cultures for beginning teachers. As a result of applying the foci of an international literature to an under-researched aspect of Irish education, this study is offered as a context-specific contribution to the knowledge base on beginning teaching. As the developmental needs of beginning teachers constitute an emerging area of intense policy focus in Ireland (Teaching Council 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b, 2013), this research undertaking is both relevant and timely.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the nine beginning primary teachers who participated in my study. Their exemplary commitment and generosity of spirit eased the fieldwork phase of my study very considerably – and all while they juggled countless demands arising from their first year in the workplace. I also wish to thank all the other beginners who generously volunteered to participate in my study.

I wish to thank my research supervisor, Dr Paul Conway, for his patient support and unfailing courtesy throughout the course of my study. I have benefited immeasurably from the rigorously incisive intellectualism which Paul brought to bear on all aspects of my study – and all leavened by considerable measures of joie de vivre!

To Professor Kathy Hall, Head of School, and to my colleagues at the School of Education, University College Cork, my appreciation and gratitude for your many encouraging words and supportive deeds.

I want to express love and gratitude to our two wonderful and beautiful daughters, Niamh and Eimear, for being constantly supportive and encouraging during the course of my study. Though PhD commitments monopolised much (all!) of my time in recent years, Niamh and Eimear remained steadfast throughout. Respect!

To my wife, Berni, your unwavering commitment to ‘the cause of the PhD’ has proved a bountiful source of strength for me. That my spirits never flagged is mainly due to you. Your tough-minded kind-heartedness proved to be a winning formula! Talk about landing on my feet! Le ghrá.

Dedications

For my late parents, Danny and Ina O’Sullivan

Le buíochas

For my sister, Margaret, my brothers, Michael, Denis, Jerry and Seán, and my late brothers, Eoghan and Richard

I gcónaí i m’aigne

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Abbreviations / Acronyms

AERA - American Educational Research Association

AT - Activity Theory

ATECI - Association of Teacher Education Centres Ireland

B.Ed. - Bachelor of Education

BERA- British Educational Research Association

CEPP - Career Entry Professional Programme

CHAT - Cultural Historical Activity Theory

DES - Department of Education and Skills (Department of Education and Science, pre 2010)

HEA - Higher Education Authority

HEI – Higher Education Institution

INTO - Irish National Teachers' Organisation

ITE - Initial Teacher Education

NCCA - National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

NCSE - National Council for Special Education

NIPT - National Induction Programme for Teachers

NPPTI - National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction

NQT - Newly Qualified Teacher

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

ROI - Republic of Ireland

SREC - Social Research Ethics Committee [UCC]

UCC - University College Cork

Glossary of terms

Activity Theory: Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), commonly shortened to Activity Theory (AT), understands human activities as complex, socially-situated phenomena. AT considers an entire work/activity system (teams, organizations, etc.) beyond just one actor or user. It accounts for environment, history of the person, culture, role of the artifact, motivations, and complexity of real life activity. A strength of AT is that it bridges the gap between the individual subject and the social reality; it studies both through the mediating activity. The unit of analysis in AT is the concept of object-oriented, collective, and culturally mediated human activity, or *activity system*. This system includes the object (or goal/objective), subject, mediating artifacts (signs and tools), rules, community, and division of labor. The motive for the activity in AT is created through the tensions and contradictions within the elements of the system. Key reading: Engeström (2001).

Agency: The capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices.

Dialogical Self Theory: Dialogical Self Theory provides a theoretical viewpoint that assumes the multiple, discontinuous and social nature of identity, while simultaneously explaining identity as being unitary, continuous and individual. Thus, acting as a "bridging theory", dialogical views combine a postmodern and a modern stance that more fully captures the concept of identity.
Key readings: Hermans (1996, 2012); Akkerman and Meijer (2011).

Beginning Teacher: A number of terms are used to describe early-career teachers. The tern 'novice teacher' is commonly used, particularly in the USA. In Ireland, the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) favour the term 'Newly Qualified Teacher', while the term 'probationary teacher' is commonly used in Department of Education and Skills (DES) documentation. In the present study, the term 'beginning teacher' is used to describe the nine newly-graduated, research participants, who are experiencing their initial year of occupational or workplace experience, post-graduation.

Embodied Learning: Fostering an embodied understanding of learning involves combining both participatory and individual perspectives on the issue. Such an approach helps to dispel dualistic, dichotomous conceptualisations of the individual and the social, and structure and agency. Furthermore, conceiving of learning as embodied understands that individuals learn as social individuals and that those social individuals contribute to the construction of the learning cultures they participate in, that agency is always structured, and that structures are constructed and reconstructed partly through agency, and that social structures interpenetrate individual and group dispositions, as well as the cultural practices of any location.
Key reading: Hodkinson et al. (2008).

Figured Worlds: The concept of identity fundamentally relates to how an individual come to *figure* who they perceive themselves to be, through the *worlds* within which they participate, and how they relate to others within and outside of those worlds.
Key reading: Holland et al. (1998).

Habitus: Within a sociocultural view of learning, the Bourdieuian concept of habitus helps to keep in view both the individual and social nature of a person's learning. Habitus expresses the sense in which the individual is social. The habitus is a battery of socially acquired, durable, transposable but also mutable dispositions to all aspects of life that are often sub-conscious or tacit. The habitus can be viewed as social structures operating within and through individuals, rather than something residing outside an individual**.** Rather than individuals being influenced by and, in turn, influencing the social structures around them, the social structures are themselves represented through individuals, in their habitus. Individual persons are viewed as reciprocal parts of the social context in which they learn, and vice versa. Habitus becomes a way of expressing the unitary integration of social structures and individual persons, and agency and structure both have significant, but complementary roles. In reality, individuals influence and are part of learning cultures just as learning cultures influence and are part of individuals. The individual and social dimensions of learning are, accordingly, perceived as mutually constitutive.
Key reading: Hodkinson et al. (2008).

Identity: For a beginning teacher, gaining an identity as a teacher means achieving a sense of being 'someone who teaches'. It involves a process of making one's own sense of a new and complex world, of belonging and being accepted in it. Important in this process is how beginning teachers view themselves as teachers; how beginning teachers view others that they professionally engage with; and how beginning teachers believe they are perceived by others.

Induction: Primarily a formative process**,** induction is a programme of teacher education which takes place during the beginning of the newly qualified teacher's career, usually the first year after qualifying as a teacher. Recognising the importance of the continuum of teacher education, induction aims to develop a culture of lifelong learning in each teacher. The purpose of an induction programme is to offer systematic professional and personal support to the newly qualified teacher.

Initial Teacher Education: Initial Teacher Education (ITE) refers to the foundation stage of learning to be a teacher when student teachers are engaged in a recognised teacher education programme provided by a Higher Education Institution. In the Republic of Ireland (ROI), five state-funded Colleges of Education offer programmes of teacher education for primary teachers through a concurrent (undergraduate) programme leading to a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree. Four of the colleges offer a Graduate Diploma in Education. The latter is also offered by a private college, Hibernia College, as an online, blended course. Undergraduate programmes for primary teachers are four years in duration. Post-graduate programmes for primary teaching are currently offered over 18 months, and this will be extended to two years with effect from September 2014.

Mentoring: Mentoring, in teaching, is a developmental partnership through which an experienced teacher shares knowledge, skills, information and perspective to help foster the personal and professional growth of a less experienced colleague.

Probationary process: All newly qualified primary teachers in the Republic of Ireland are required to undergo a probationary period in accordance with defined procedures. Primarily evaluative, the probationary process must be completed satisfactorily by newly-qualified teachers if they are to fulfil the conditions of their registration with the Teaching Council. It incorporates two elements; the 'service' requirement and the 'professional competence' requirement. Pending the operation of the probationary process directly under the auspices of the Teaching Council, the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills, at the request of the Teaching Council, continue to evaluate the professional competence of teachers for the purposes of informing the Teaching Council's decisions regarding the conditional or full registration of primary teachers. The probationary period ends when the Teaching Council is satisfied that both the 'service' requirement and the 'professional competence' requirement are fully met. The Council then provides confirmation to the teacher regarding his/her conditional or full registration as a teacher. Key readings: Circular 0029/2012 (DES 2012c); *Droichead* Initiative on Induction & Probation (Teaching Council 2013).

Research participants: In the past, those taking part in research were commonly referred to as 'subjects'. More recently, however, there is evidence of a steady shift in the language used to describe people who take part in research, with the term 'research subject' being superseded by the expression 'research participant', in recognition of the active role that human beings play in the research process as contributing participants.

Shaping identity: The term 'shaping identity' accords due recognition to the symbiotic relationship between identity and its shaping influences. Understanding identity as 'shaped', acknowledges the enmeshed contribution of structure and agency to the dynamic character of identity.

Sociocultural theories: Sociocultural theories, as used in my study, are rooted in the cultural-historical tradition instigated by the Russian psychologists Vygotsky, Leont'ev and Luria. Broad-based sociocultural understandings perceive learning as fundamentally situative, relational and participative. Thus, the learner, or beginning teacher, in this instance, is conceived as a cultural and historical subject, situated within, and constituted by, a network of social relationships, arising from participative interaction within the traditions of a particular cultural environment. Key readings: Lave and Wenger (1991); Wenger (1998); Putnam and Borko (2000); Rogoff (2003); Hodkinson et al. (2008).

Structure: Arrangements which influence or limit choices and opportunities made available to individuals.

Teaching Council: The Teaching Council is the professional body for teaching in Ireland. Statutorily established, in March 2006, under the Teaching Council Act, 2001, it aims to promote and maintain the highest standards of teaching, learning and professional conduct in Irish schools. As the professional body for teaching in Ireland, the Teaching Council discharges many functions relating to teacher education. These functions range along a continuum aligned with the professional journey of a teacher as a lifelong learner, namely; from participation in initial teacher education programmes, to the induction and probation of newly qualified teachers into the profession and, finally, the continuing professional development of teachers throughout their careers. Key readings: Teaching Council (2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b, 2013).

Chapter 1: Introduction

You kind of have to step up [Fiona, Interview 3].

Constituting a 'step up', for Fiona, as for all beginning teachers, the first year of teaching is a pivotally important phase, possessing the potential to deepen learning that has already taken place in initial teacher education, as well as preparing the first-year teacher for continuing professional development. Yet, if teacher educators are in agreement on anything it is that beginning teaching is complex, not only because teachers learn to teach by drawing on a complex array of variables, which are difficult for researchers to disentangle (Davis and Sumara 1997), but also because it occurs over time and is contextualised, unpredictable, and often idiosyncratic. Therefore, beginning to teach is well recognised as a particular and inherently complex professional phase. Located, Janus-like, between initial teacher education and continuing professional development, a beginning teacher's first year of occupational experience, post-graduation, represents a crucial juncture in the continuum of teacher learning; not least because of issues relating to school culture, socialisation, mentoring support, identity, well-being, self-efficacy, commitment and retention, classroom instructional practices and student achievement (e.g. Feiman-Nemser 2001, 2010; Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Johnson 2004, 2012a, 2012b; Kardos and Johnson 2007, 2010; Watzke 2007; Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy 2007; Wang et al. 2008; Hobson et al. 2009; Avalos 2011; Meijer et al. 2011; Spalding et al. 2011; Shoffner 2011; Ingersoll and Strong 2011).

Increasing interest in early-career learning in general (Fuller and Unwin 2004; Evans et al. 2006; Eraut 2007; Nyström 2009; Skår 2010; Blaney 2006 cited in McNally and

Blake 2010a; Vaughan 2010; Black et al. 2010; Lakes 2011) is manifest in school-based settings in the considerable volume of research undertaken in relation to the induction, mentoring and early professional development of beginning teachers (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Jones 2002; Cameron 2007; Townsend and Bates 2007; Ashby et al. 2008; Hobson et al. 2009; McNally and Blake 2010a; Hamman et al. 2010; Ingersoll and Strong 2011; Czerniawski 2011). Specifically, though a concept that researchers define and explore in a multitude of ways (Beijaard et al. 2004; Beauchamp and Thomas 2009, pp. 175-6), over recent years, a burgeoning of research on beginning teacher identity has deepened and complicated our understanding of the role of identity in learning to teach (Rodgers and Scott 2008).

Developing a strong sense of identity as a teacher is crucial to the well-being of new members of the profession (Thomas and Beauchamp 2011). Non-linear and ongoing, though patterned, the formulation of an identity is a strenuous, complex, continuous and messy process, as beginning teachers make multiple decisions, wrestle with the resulting consequences, and search for ways to effectively articulate their new roles (Flores and Day 2006; McNally and Blake 2010a; Beauchamp and Thomas 2011; Thomas and Beauchamp 2011). Consequently, beginning teacher learning is as much about the changing or shaping of identity, the becoming of a certain kind of person, as it is about the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. Informed by this principle, the shaping of identity among nine beginning primary teachers, in Ireland, during the course of their initial year of workplace experience, post-graduation, is the core concern of my research undertaking.

This introductory chapter contains information relating to a number of areas, important to my study: purpose of research, research perspectives and focus, research contexts, scope of research, design and methodology, scholarly significance, study limitations, thesis overview, researcher's motivations and study timeline.

1.1 Purpose of my research

The shift from the protected environment of an initial teacher education programme into initial practice in schools is a period of identity change worthy of investigation. The influence of a school context has an effect on the often fragile identity of a newly graduated teacher, as adaptations and adjustments to identity are necessitated or provoked (Beauchamp and Thomas 2011). The conceptualisation, as mutually constitutive, of identity and the institutional settings in which identity is activated through participation-in-practice (Wetherell 2010) leads to an enhanced understanding of the interrelatedness of workplace learning and the shaping of beginning teacher identity (Rodgers and Scott 2008; Hamman et al. 2010, 2013a; Czerniawski 2011).

In my study, the shaping of beginning identity is conceived of in dimensional terms. As a result, a framework composed of three dimensions of beginning teacher experience is devised, namely: contextual; emotional; temporo-spatial. In seeking to research the mutually constitutive dynamic between the inherent dimensionality of first-year workplace experience, post-graduation, and the shaping of beginning teacher identity, the purpose of my study is to afford insights into the complexities of beginning teachers' constructions and understandings of their lives and work. In doing so, my study contributes to our understanding of a crucial, yet under-researched, area of Irish school life. In undertaking a 'how it is' look at beginning teaching in an Irish

context, my study emulates work conducted in Scotland and England (McNally and Blake 2010a).

1.2 Research perspectives and research focus

In conceiving of teaching as a complex intellectual endeavour that unfolds in equally complex sociocultural contexts (Borko et al. 2007), my study is informed by the principles of the interpretive research genre.

Paradigmatically, my research is undertaken within the ambit of the constructivist paradigm (Mertens 2010). Ontologically, therefore, the research goal is to understand the complexities of lived experience from the viewpoints of participating beginning teacher informants, throughout the course of their initial year of occupational experience, post-graduation. In this manner, by focusing on understanding early-career experiences from the viewpoint of the beginning teacher participants, the research undertaking privileges 'insider' perspective (Borko et al. 2007, p. 5). With respect to beginning teaching, the vast majority of literature surrounding new teacher induction and mentorship support, Fantilli and McDougall (2009) state, is void of the voice of the beginning teacher. In eliciting the perspectives of beginning teachers, my study seeks, in modest fashion, to redress this imbalance. Seeking the perceptions of others in the research locations - pupils, parents, principals, teaching assistants and fellow teachers - does not form part of my research undertaking. Therefore, while not multi-perspectival in the broadest meaning of the term, my study, in articulating the individual voices of a number of beginning teachers, can be considered to incorporate a range of differing perspectives.

Epistemologically, adherence to the principles of the constructivist paradigm is evident in that the guiding theoretical framework emerges from a review of conceptual and empirical practice-based literature, informed by the tenets of sociocultural theories (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998; Putnam and Borko 2000; Rogoff 2003; Hodkinson et al. 2008), activity theory (Engeström 1987, 1999, 2001), figured worlds theory (Holland et al. 1998) and dialogical self theory (Hermans 1996, 2012; Akkerman and Meijer 2011). As all emanate from the broad church that is the cultural-historical tradition and reflect the assumptions of that tradition, these theories are synergistic and when utilised together provide a richer view of the shaping of beginning teacher identities than either could offer in isolation. Together they act as deductive, interrogative instruments throughout (Brenner 2006, p. 361), furnishing a set of analytical approaches that facilitate an understanding of the complexities inherent to the shaping of beginning teacher identity in the workplace. Thus, drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives, the incorporation, as sensitising principles, of broad-based sociocultural understandings of learning as fundamentally situative, relational and participative, allied to the utilisation, as theoretical framing devices, of the foundational principles and individual components of activity theory, figured worlds theory, and dialogical self theory, help illuminate the dimensional nature of beginning teacher identity shaping, as perceived by the beginning teacher research informants.

Thus, the focus of my enquiry is encapsulated in the following overarching research question:

> *Drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives, what aspects of the contextual, emotional, and temporo-spatial dimensions of early-career experience prove revealing with respect to the shaping of beginning teacher identity?*

1.3 Research contexts: Dynamic, evolving and complex

Unavoidably, research undertakings are conducted within a range of wider, always complex, contexts. In the first instance, the existence of various stakeholders, at all levels of education systems, means that the articulation of opposing points of view is inevitable. Furthermore, education, always a prominent instrument of government policy, is frequently, and increasingly, complicated by national iterations of internationally-influenced policy agendas. Therefore, debates on such topics as teacher education reform, assessment of educational outcomes, teacher accountability, and the structure and funding of education systems, possess both common elements and national variations attaching to the many tensions that come to the surface (Punch 2009, p. 39). Moreover, a national policy context can be unduly influenced by international policy imperatives, "despite such influences being 'refracted' in different ways due to traditions of schooling in the country, and the current distribution of power among the major stakeholders" (Sugrue 2006, p. 181). Consequently, as in the case of Ireland, internationally-influenced, reform-orientated policy imperatives, which foster increased levels of bureaucracy, performativity, accountability and control, become defining features of the educational landscape at national level and play a not insignificant role in shaping teacher identity (Sugrue 2006, 2011; Conway

and Murphy 2013; Conway 2013). The debate, with international and national overtones, which is of direct relevance to the present undertaking, relates to the shaping of beginning teachers' identities. Therefore, an appreciation of the linkages between international and national influences enhances our appreciation of the multi-level nature of beginning experience and the shaping of identity.

In the following sub-sections, fragments of the history, traditions, trajectories and transformations, characteristic of primary schooling in the Republic of Ireland, and significantly influential in the shaping of beginning teacher identity, are addressed. Firstly, an account of the structure, organisation and evolving character of primary schooling, is provided. Secondly, policy and programmatic responses, in support of beginning teachers, are outlined.

1.3.1 Primary schooling in the Republic of Ireland: Structure and organisation

Generally small in size, with almost four-fifths employing less than eight teachers, there are 3300 publicly-funded primary (or National) schools in the Republic of Ireland, including 141 special primary schools for pupils with special educational needs (Department of Education and Skills [DES] 2012b). Contributing to the relatively small average school size in Ireland is the fact that almost one fifth of primary schools have less than 50 pupils, a relative rarity by international standards (Lewis and Archer 2013, p. 25). The vast majority, over 90%, are under the patronage (i.e. owned and managed) of the Catholic Church. A range of other, mostly denominational, patronage models apply in the case of the remaining schools: Church of Ireland (174), Presbyterian (17), Methodist (1), Jewish (1), Islamic (2), Interdenominational/Multidenominational (75), Quaker (1) [Hyland 2012, p. 30].

Currently, patronage of primary schools is a much debated topic, as the number of schools under Catholic Church patronage is disproportionate to the number of children for whom Catholic education is sought by their parents/guardians. In April 2011, a Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector was established by the Minister for Education and Skills to examine this issue. The Report of the committee was published in April 2012 (Coolahan et al. 2012). Responding, in June 2012, the Minister broadly accepted the recommendations on divestment contained in the Report and the process leading to divesting of patronage has commenced.

Simultaneously highly centralised and decentralised, the Irish State funds the construction and maintenance of primary schools, and pays the salaries of the 31,928 primary teachers who staff the system (DES 2012b). Primary education consists of an eight year cycle: junior infants, senior infants, and first to sixth classes. Nearly 40% of four-year-olds and almost all five-year-olds are enrolled in infant classes in primary schools. Pupils normally transfer to post-primary education at the age of twelve. Including special primary schools, a total of 516,460 pupils currently attend primary school in the Republic of Ireland (DES 2012b). Unlike other EU countries, the school-going population in Ireland is increasing and pupil enrolments at all levels of education are projected to grow significantly in the next five years. This will have implications for the provision of school places and for teacher demand.

Until 1998, education was almost entirely unregulated by legislation. This period of neglect of the educational sphere, on the part of the legislature, has been described as "a century of legislative indifference" (Meaney et al. 2005, p. 4). However, since

1998 the legislature has passed several Acts that give a statutory basis to the system of education in Ireland and ensure a focus on education outside the judicial domain. Of interest to my study, a number of recent legislative developments relate to the early-career development of teachers. These developments seek to systematise, regulate, professionalise, and generally ensure that standards of competence and expertise within the teaching profession are of a high order.

The Teaching Council [www.teachingcouncil.ie] is the professional body for teaching in Ireland. Statutorily established, in March 2006, under the Teaching Council Act, 2001, it aims to promote and maintain the highest standards of teaching, learning and professional conduct in Irish schools. Accordingly, the Council maintains a Register of Teachers, and has published a Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (Teaching Council 2012b). As the professional body for teaching in Ireland, the Teaching Council discharges many functions relating to teacher education (Lawlor 2009). These functions range along a continuum aligned with the professional journey of a teacher as a lifelong learner, namely; from participation in initial teacher education programmes, to the induction of newly qualified teachers into the profession and, finally, the continuing professional development of teachers throughout their careers (Teaching Council 2011a).

Initial teacher education programmes for primary teachers are accredited by the Teaching Council (Teaching Council 2011b). From September 2012, to be eligible for registration as a primary teacher, student teachers are required to undertake either a concurrent (undergraduate) initial teacher education programme for a minimum of four years, or a consecutive (postgraduate) teacher education programme of two years

duration. Five colleges of education provide publicly-funded initial teacher education programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels for primary teachers. Currently, all five colleges are owned and managed by Church bodies. In addition to the five publicly funded providers, there is one private provider, Hibernia College, which provides an accredited post-graduate initial teacher education programme online and on a blended learning basis for primary teachers. In 2010/2011, a combined total of 1174 students graduated from the five publicly-funded colleges for primary teachers – 973 from concurrent programmes and 91 from consecutive programmes. In addition, there were 713 graduates from the Hibernia College consecutive programme (Hyland 2012, p. 14). The ratio of applicants to places in the publicly-funded colleges of education for primary teachers is high and successful candidates are invariably within the top 15% of those who apply for places in higher education. Retention and success rates among students in colleges of education are the highest in the higher education sector. These factors, among others, ensure the teaching profession in Ireland is held in high esteem, a respect that is deeply rooted in history (Conway et al. 2009; Drudy 2009b; Hyland 2012, p. 17). Nonetheless, in tandem with the maintenance of high regard for the teaching profession in Irish society, a number of teacher education-related issues are currently of concern. Among other standards and accountability-related issues, the need for greater coherence and integration across the professional life span, and concerns relating to the capacities of teaching candidates (and experienced teachers) in the core areas of literacy and numeracy, feature prominently (Conway and Murphy 2013).

Since the 1990s, the pace of legislative change in the education sector (Meaney et al. 2005; Kilkelly 2009), together with significant changes to, and reform of, curriculum

(DES 1999) and assessment (NCCA 2007; Mac Ruairc 2009a; DES 2012a), ensure an evolving and dynamic context for teaching at primary school level. Furthermore, the introduction of *Aistear* (NCCA 2009), a new framework for early childhood education, brings into focus the work of teachers in the junior classes of primary school (Moloney 2010). The Government's *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030* (Government of Ireland 2010) highlights the challenges and requirements that arise in preparing teachers to teach Irish throughout their careers. The *National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020* (DES 2011a, 2011b), while reactive in nature, and willfully free of empirically-based foundations, at least possesses the virtue of fostering literacy and numeracy abilities.

In parallel, in recent years, teachers have encountered a range of new challenges and opportunities in the classroom. In this respect, of increasing significance are regard for social inclusion (Lodge et al. 2004; Deegan 2004; Drudy and Kinsella 2009; Mac Ruairc 2004, 2009b), ethnic diversity (Devine et al. 2004; NCCA 2005; Devine 2009, 2011), inclusion of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs into mainstream primary schools (DES 2005c, 2007; Shevlin et al. 2008; Barry 2009; O'Gorman 2009; O'Gorman and Drudy 2010; Rose et al. 2010; Griffin and Shevlin 2011; McCoy et al. 2012; NCSE 2006, 2011a, 2011b, 2013; Rose et al. 2012). Furthermore, issues arising from an increasingly diverse society, changing family structures and the emergence of new societal and economic problems are contributing to the complexity of teaching in 21st century Ireland (Deegan et al. 2004; Drudy 2009; O'Sullivan and West-Burnham 2011). As a result, there is a heightened expectation in relation to the role of teachers and a major cultural shift whereby

teaching now requires a greater degree of interaction with students, colleagues, parents and co-professionals. Increasingly, primary teachers discharge some of these responsibilities as part of additional hours worked under the Croke Park Agreement (DES 2011c). In September 2012, following a review conducted by international experts on behalf of the DES, plans to overhaul the provision of initial teacher education (ITE) in Ireland were published. The review recommends that the provision of ITE be significantly rationalised. The resultant restructuring would ensure that all centres of ITE would possess the 'critical mass' necessary for the institutional presence of internationally acknowledged, best-practice principles, namely, research-informed and research-led teaching, close engagement with schools, and opportunities for international cooperation (Sahlberg 2012, p. 25). The Minister for Education and Skills accepted the review recommendations and a range of mergers across initial teacher education institutions are currently being implemented.

1.3.2 Supporting beginning teachers: Policy and programmatic responses

Perceived as a collective and supported accomplishment rather than a solo activity (Conway at al. 2009, p. 196), acknowledging the complex, multi-dimensional, idiosyncratic and context-specific nature of becoming a teacher, leads to an understanding that the initial teacher education phase is incapable, on its own, of providing the capacity necessary for successful teaching, and that a significant portion of this capacity is acquired only while acting as an actual teacher in the classroom (Mutton et al. 2008). Hence, this perspective continues, the learning needs of beginning teachers are legitimate, and it is necessary that the school community would provide an environment where beginners are able to develop professionally and succeed as teachers. The need for systematic programmes of induction, which support

beginners in their entry into the profession is, thus, widely endorsed (Bates and Townsend 2007, p. 732; Aitken and Harford 2011, p. 350). As a consequence, the provision of induction supports, increasingly conceived of as the 'connective tissue' (Feiman-Nemser 2001, p. 1049) critical to the delivery of an interfaced continuum of teacher education, composed of initial teacher education, induction, and continuing professional development phases, has become a key policy focus internationally (Conway et al. 2009; Hobson et al. 2009; Stephenson and Bartlett 2009; Strong 2009; Ingersoll and Strong 2011). With respect to the focus of my study, from both policy and practice perspectives, the induction of beginning teachers is viewed as a central component of the newly conceived continuum of teacher education. In this regard, systems of support for beginners have been developed, for example, in the USA (Ingersoll and Strong 2011), in many countries in northern Europe (Fransson and Gustafsson 2008), and in the United Kingdom (McNally et al. 2010).

1.3.2.1 Moving from 'whether'-related towards 'what'-related policy concerns

Having established induction supports for beginners, challenges associated with the complexity of learning to teach, move us forwards from a concern about whether structures are in place to support beginning teachers, towards a finer-grained concern for what takes place within these structures (Haggarty and Postlethwaite 2009, p. 2; Richter et al. 2013).

Diverse and variable in nature, recent examples of negative consequences for the learning of beginning teachers are evident in research conducted on induction programmes in school systems as disparate as Scotland (Rippon and Martin 2006; Draper et al. 2007), Northern Ireland (Abbott et al. 2009), Israel (Fresko and Nasser-Abu Alhija 2009), Portugal (Flores and Ferreira 2009), United States (Kardos and

Johnson 2010; Feiman-Nemser 2010), New Zealand (Langdon 2011; Anthony et al. 2011; Grudnoff 2012), Germany (Richter et al. 2013) and Ontario, Canada (Kane and Francis 2013). For example, negative consequences arise when induction elements are planned, but not fully or effectively implemented; the fragmentary nature of some beginners' employment disrupts the induction process; typically adhering to transmissive rather than constructivist principles, individualistic school cultures prove problematic with respect to providing beginners with collaborative learning opportunities; induction programmes frequently prioritise 'survival' issues relating to classroom management to the detriment of developing beginners' expertise to progress student learning, and so on. As a result, how induction is both conceived and transacted is a matter of ongoing concern, internationally.

1.3.2.2 Proceeding with caution: Visiting rigor on an evidence base

While research in relation to the induction needs of beginning teachers has been significantly developed over recent decades, certain problems with the evidence base remain (Devos et al. 2012). Some studies, lacking in methodological rigor, draw conclusions that reach beyond what their data truly support. Moreover, the content, duration, and delivery of programmes vary so much from one site to another that it is not clear to what extent general conclusions about induction can be drawn from the research. The evidence is by no means overwhelming that induction programmes influence more than teachers' sense of well-being and their rates of attrition, and is very scant on the outcomes of student achievement and teacher practice (Wang et al. 2008; Strong 2009, p. 103). Yet, despite the limitations of individual studies, it can be stated with a degree of confidence that research has enhanced our understanding of the potential benefits of induction support for beginning teachers (Hobson et al. 2009,

p. 209; Ingersoll and Strong 2011, p. 225; Anthony et al. 2011, p. 861). In the main, though, this scholarship, albeit emanating from different educational settings, is one in the view that the first year of teaching is challenging for most beginning teachers.

1.3.2.3 Bringing it all back home……..somewhat

Despite the volume of international research highlighting the challenges facing beginning teachers, comparatively little in-depth analysis has been undertaken on the induction phase of teaching in the Republic of Ireland (Conway et al. 2009, p.185; Aitken and Harford 2011).Yet, notable exceptions aside [e.g. O'Doherty and Deegan 2009; Killeavy and Moloney 2010], despite a paucity of context-specific research evidence, the transition from an initial teacher education programme to working as a teacher in a school is now viewed as a critical professional development phase (National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT): Primary 2010; DES 2012c; Teaching Council 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b, 2013). Adopting a developmental approach, it is acknowledged that during the induction phase, teachers refine their teaching skills in school settings as they continue with their professional development that began during initial teacher education and will continue throughout their careers.

Thus, the developmental needs of beginning teachers in Ireland are increasingly acknowledged, and feature as central components in a proposed continuum of teacher learning and development. Particularly important to the articulation of these principles, was the publication by the Teaching Council, in June 2011, of its *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education* (Teaching Council 2011a). Currently, some aspects of the proposed continuum have commenced, while other elements remain at

a developmental stage. Overall, though, the Teaching Council (2011a) is unambiguous on the matter of beginning teaching; the first year of a beginning teacher's career constitutes "a critical period" and "a particularly significant phase in building a seamless continuum of teacher education" (p. 16).

1.3.2.4 Supporting beginners: National Induction Programme for Teachers

Recognising the importance of supporting teachers in making a successful transition from initial teacher education to working in school, in September 2010, the Minister for Education and Skills established a National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT). Evolving from the National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction (NPPTI), which was established in 2002, the primary pillar of the programme is located in St. Patrick's College, Dublin City University.

Induction, as currently conceptualised, encompasses a school-based strand involving mentoring support, and an out-of-school strand in the form of a nationally delivered workshop programme. As of July 2012, arising from an ongoing consultative process in connection with the publication, in January 2012, of the Career Entry Professional Programme (CEPP) consultation document (Teaching Council 2012a), the Teaching Council decreed that engagement in the workshop programme is a requirement for full registration. Engagement in the school-based strand is not currently a requirement for full registration and, in any event, is not available to all newly registered teachers as not every school has a trained mentor on the staff. Therefore, as of September 2013, the NIPT makes available to all qualified teachers, who have been granted conditional registration by the Teaching Council, an induction support programme

consisting of not less than 10 two-hour workshops, organised throughout the country in collaboration with the Association of Teacher Education Centres Ireland (ATECI).

Making participation in the out-of-school strand of the NIPT mandatory for beginners is a welcome development. As with its predecessor, the NPPTI (Killeavy and Murphy 2006), since its inception, in September 2010, the objectives of the NIPT were encumbered by the voluntary nature of participation, on the part of beginning teachers and schools, in its activities. Now, however, seeking to ensure that beginning teachers are inducted into the profession of teaching and that their developing pedagogical skills are consolidated, the programme of not less than 10 two-hour workshops provides support and advice in the following areas: working as a professional; classroom management and organisation; child protection; behaviour management; numeracy; literacy; strategies for teaching Irish; inclusive practice; planning and preparation; working with parents; assessment; and, differentiation. In addition, the NIPT continues to coordinate a mentoring programme in schools on an opt-in basis, facilitates professional support groups, and offers professional support to beginners via phone and e-mail, and through its website, www.teacherinduction.ie. Furthermore, the NIPT is afforded ample opportunity by The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) to communicate with beginning teachers through a dedicated section of the INTO website, www.into.ie/ROI/InfoforTeachers/NewlyQualifiedTeachers, and through the INTO monthly publication, *In Touch.* Particularly noteworthy are a series of articles targeted at beginning teachers, entitled *From College to Classroom,* authored by the national co-ordinator of the NIPT, Mary Burke, which have appeared on a monthly basis in the *In Touch* publication, since the beginning of the 2010/2011 school-year. Broadly, the content of these articles has a practical focus and reflect

themes addressed in the NIPT workshop series i.e. planning and preparation, practical assessment, working with parents, and so on.

At a policy level, the Department of Education and Skills envision the induction programme as complementing the support, advice, and opportunities for teacher observation and feedback that principal teachers and other teachers provide to beginning teachers in their schools (DES 2012c). However, as with all policy pronouncements, rather than accepting an aspirational claim at face value (Deegan 2012), my inquiry seeks to establish the degree to which supportive practices are a feature of beginning experience. Specifically, with regard to the NIPT-sponsored mentoring initiative, the role of the NIPT-trained mentor is officially envisaged as including the organisation and adaptation of

> ….school-based induction activities to suit the school context which include regular meetings to provide on-going support to NQT's [Newly Qualified Teachers], planning sessions, observation followed by reflection and feedback sessions and a range of other induction activities. (Burke 2012, p. 29)

In light of the above statement, my inquiry attempts to establish the actual mentoring experiences of those among the research cohort who were assigned an NIPT-trained mentor in their schools. In short, my inquiry attempts to ascertain the degree, if any, of a policy-practice gap, in respect of how the NIPT-sponsored mentoring initiative is transacted in schools.

While participation, on the part of beginning teachers, in the activities of the NIPT, was voluntary during the data collection phase of my study (i.e. 2010/2011 school-year), nonetheless, my inquiry elicits participants' perspectives on workshop sessions

attended in various Education Centres. My motivation for so doing, relates to establishing the degree to which participants would deem workshop sessions to have adopted generic, 'scripted' or overly-prescriptive approaches. For instance, it may be in order to view the practice of using a "reflective workbook that has been especially developed by the NIPT" (Burke 2012, p. 29) at each workshop session, as an overly-prescriptive practice.

1.3.2.5 Teaching Council: Dovetailing the induction and probation of beginners

While, latterly, the formative term 'induction' is frequently associated with beginning teaching, the more evaluative term 'probation' has traditionally been the dominant term used in connection with beginning teaching in Ireland. While not as exacting a process, in performative terms, as formerly (Coolahan and O'Donovan 2009), the Teaching Council requires all beginning primary teachers to complete probation successfully before they can achieve full registration. Hitherto, the sole responsibility of the Department of Education and Skills, as the sections of the Teaching Council Act, 2001 dealing with induction and probation were commenced in September 2012, the Teaching Council has a statutory responsibility for establishing procedures and criteria for the induction and probation of newly qualified teachers.

Reflecting feedback received during the course of 2012, arising from a Career Entry Professional Programme (CEPP) consultation process (Teaching Council 2012a), and grounded in the values of professionally-led regulation, shared professional responsibility and collective professional confidence, in March 2013 the Teaching Council instituted a new model of induction and probation to be piloted over the period 2013-2015. The pilot initiative, called *Droichead* (*bridge* in Irish), will include

beginners at both primary and post-primary levels. An opt-in scheme, in primary schools not participating in the pilot, current professional practice requirements, overseen by the DES Inspectorate, will be maintained for all newly qualified teachers working in such schools (DES 2012c). These arrangements involve a minimum teaching service requirement of 100 days and incidental visits from a DES Inspector, who prepares a report on the suitability of the beginning teacher for the purposes of informing the Teaching Council's decisions regarding the conditional or full registration of the teacher. Full registration is confirmed when the teacher informs the Teaching Council that the probationary process has been successfully completed.

At the core of the *Droichead* initiative (Teaching Council 2013) is a culture whereby teachers, as a community of professional learners, would be the first to welcome their newly qualified colleagues into the profession. Through the pilot, the Teaching Council seeks help in filling in the detail of how the process can work best in the school, therefore providing a unique opportunity for the teaching profession to inform the proposed model of induction and probation. In this fashion, my research endeavor with beginning teachers also seeks to inform the model of induction and probation envisaged for future implementation in Irish schools.

Following a series of consultative meetings during April/May 2013, at which a range of concerns were voiced by principals and teachers, including beginning teachers, in June 2013, members of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) were directed by the Central Executive Committee of the union not to participate in the *Droichead* pilot scheme, pending the outcome of a vote by members during the autumn 2013 term. This development illustrates that a thorough understanding of the

rationale underlying any proposed innovation in education, critically determines its effective implementation by all stakeholders, but particularly by frontline teachers who are closest to the 'action' (Drudy and Kinsella 2009; Day and Lee 2011; Hargreaves and Fullan 2012; Coolahan 2012; Burke 2013). With clear implications for any approach adopted by the Teaching Council, because the refashioning of elaborated ideologies into enacted and lived everyday realities of implementation and consolidation is a process fraught with uncertainty (Deegan 2012, p.183), engendering 'ownership' of the *Droichead* initiative, on the parts of those who will be most intimately involved in its implementation, is an indispensable requirement for a successful outcome.

In developing school environments supportive of beginners, not least among the challenges encountered, and amplified in an era of economic constraint, are logistical and cultural difficulties arising from the introduction of new professional practices such as observation, reflection and collegial inquiry in school contexts that are extremely busy and without protected time for engagement in such activities (Conway et al. 2009, pp. 185-186; Aitken and Harford 2011, p. 355). As with equivalent undertakings internationally, it takes more than policy documentation to create effective induction programmes (Kardos and Johnson 2010; Anthony et al. 2011, p. 862). Of particular importance, in this regard, is the quality of communication between the Teaching Council and schools. A communicative approach, on the part of the Teaching Council, is particularly important in determining how its policies translate into practices supportive of beginning teachers. To date, however, the Teaching Council may have been overly presumptuous in relation to the implementation of these policy principles in schools (Coolahan 2012).

1.4 Scope of research

Graduating, in June 2010, from five different initial teacher education programmes, hosted in three different colleges of education, in Ireland, the selection of nine beginning primary teacher research participants for my study followed a replication rather than a sampling logic (Yin 2009). Therefore, rather than selecting a random sample, during the spring of 2010, a volunteer cohort of approximately thirty trainee teachers was recruited via the 'snowball' sampling method. 'Snowball' sampling relies on referrals from initial participants to generate additional participants (Cohen et al. 2007, p. 116). As a sampling logic is not used, typical sampling criteria are irrelevant. In any case, when the objective is to achieve the greatest possible amount of information on a given phenomenon, a random sample may not be the most appropriate strategy. Instead, the generalisability of case studies can be increased by the strategic selection of cases (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 229).

In selecting nine beginning teacher research participants from among the cohort of approximately thirty volunteers, overriding considerations related to feasibility, manageability and the vagaries of the beginning teacher employment market. Also acting as determinants in the final selection of research participants were such factors as the nature of individual employment contracts, school type and size, and the geographic location of workplace settings. Ultimately, the research undertaking included beginning teachers who worked in a variety of primary school settings: single gender, mixed gender, socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged, urban and rural. In this manner, the selection of "maximum variation cases" (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 230) frequently reveals more information because more actors and more basic mechanisms are activated in the situations studied. Therefore, the degree to which the research cohort can be considered to be representative is strengthened,

thus enhancing the generalisability (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 229) or transferability (Mertens 2010, p. 259) of the research claims. A majority, six of the nine research participants, are female. However, as gender does not feature as a focus of study in my research, it did not inform the composition of the participating cohort.

1.5 Research design and methodology

Subscribing to a need for methodological rigor (Kelchtermans 2008), in ascertaining the mutually constitutive nature of workplace experience and the shaping of beginning teacher identity over time [one school-year], and across contexts [nine beginning teachers, in nine varied workplace settings], a multiple-case study research design was employed (Stake 2006; Yin 2009). Individual, face-to-face semi-structured interviews, and the maintenance of solicited digital diaries (or e-mail logs) by research participants, were the principal methods of data collection employed.

In the case of each beginning teacher, a three-cycle, multi-phase interview design allowed snapshots of developing experience (Goos 2005, p. 43) to be captured at three points during the first year of occupational experience, post-graduation i.e. November 2010, March 2011 and June 2011. Additionally, participants were requested to submit one digital diary every three weeks to my e-mail account. Furthermore, the story-line method (Conway 2001) was utilised as a supplementary method of data collection. Therefore, unlike less comprehensive approaches to research, my multi-round collection of data captures an evolving picture of beginning teacher experience and the progressive shaping of beginning identity.

1.6 Scholarly significance of study

From a scholarly perspective, this research undertaking on the shaping of beginning teachers' identities is both conceptually and methodologically significant.

Conceptually, though explored in a variety of very different ways (Beijaard et al. 2004; Beauchamp and Thomas 2009, pp. 175-6), a growing interest in teacher identity generally (Zembylas 2003a; Menter 2008; Akkerman and Meijer 2011), accompanies an increased emphasis on the shaping of identity among beginning teachers (Flores and Day 2006; Rodgers and Scott 2008; Feiman-Nemser 2008; McNally and Blake 2010a, 2010b; Thomas and Beauchamp 2011; Beauchamp and Thomas 2011). In devising a framework to help marshal data pertaining to the shaping of beginners' identities, I have loosely borrowed from McNally et al. (2010) who posit that for the beginner in teaching, the trajectory of identity shaping is best understood as a multidimensional experience. As a result, in my study, a framework composed of three dimensions of beginning teacher experience is devised, namely: contextual; emotional; temporo-spatial. By contrast, McNally et al. (2010) had nominated seven dimensions of experience, as influential on the shaping of beginning identity. While I endorse the adoption of a dimensional approach, I employ a narrower range of dimensions, as I believe that while the adoption of seven dimensions allows a more differentiated understanding of the complex phenomenon of beginning teaching, three dimensions avoids an overly fragmented view of the issue. The interrelation or overlap between beginning-related issues approached separately by McNally et al. (2010) justifies, in my view, a winnowing down of issues into more parsimonious groupings.

Table 1A furnishes an overview of the winnowing process.

Table 1A Dimensions of beginning teacher experience

Seven dimensions of beginning experience **[McNally et al. 2010, pp.17-18]**	**Three dimensions of beginning experience** **[My study]**
Structural: Organisational aspects of the school and the wider educational system, including the formal induction processes, the idea of education in society and relevant wider social factors and changes;	
Relational: The social interactions with others, essentially pupils and teachers, as well as 'internal dialogues' with notions of self as becoming a professional.	**Contextual**
Emotional: The range and intensity of feeling from anxiety and despair to delight and fulfilment that permeate new teachers' descriptions of their learning experiences;	**Emotional**
Ethical: The commitments, purposes and values expressed by new teachers.	
Temporal: Recognising the changes and trajectories over the induction year, including subjective aspects such as memories and aspirations;	
Material: Concrete manifestations of structure as resources, rooms etc. as they apply to teachers as embodied and spatially located subjects;	**Temporo-spatial**
Cognitive: Knowledge, understanding and thinking processes in professional practices, especially on pedagogy and curriculum.	

Researching the shaping of beginning teacher identity is important for a number of reasons. It leads to a robust theory of early professional learning in teaching (McNally and Blake 2010a), is a necessary prerequisite to effecting evidence-based improvements in initial teacher education programmes (Shoffner 2011), and helps to foster the development of facilitative, yet reflective and interrogative, school cultures for beginning teachers (Feiman-Nemser 2001, 2008, 2010; Kardos et al. 2001; Johnson and Kardos 2004; Flores 2004, 2010; Kardos and Johnson 2007, 2010; Conway et al. 2009, 2010, 2011; Hall et al. 2012). In an Irish context, however, notable exceptions aside, e.g. Morgan and O'Leary 2004; Gash 2006; Kitching et al. 2009; Morgan et al. 2010; Killeavy and Moloney 2010; Morgan 2011, beginning teaching is under-researched. Consequently, research-based understandings of this crucial phase in the professional lives of Irish primary teachers are less than comprehensive.

Informed by the literature of an international community of practice, whose foci relate to fostering understandings of the complexity of beginning to teach, this study, to coin a phrase, "stands on the shoulders of giants". But while the focus of the undertaking is not novel, by applying the foci of an international literature to an under-researched aspect of Irish education, this study is offered as a context-specific contribution (Thomas 2011, 2012) to the growing knowledge base on beginning teaching.

While significant due to its focus on the hitherto neglected shaping of beginning primary teachers' identities in Ireland, conceptually, this undertaking is also significant due to the contribution it makes to a number of other, closely related, developing fields of study, all of which have experienced considerable growth in

recent years: early-career learning (e.g. Fuller and Unwin 2004; Evans et al. 2006; Stokes 2007; Vaughan 2010; Skår 2010; Black et al. 2010; Blaney 2006 cited in McNally and Blake 2010a; Lakes 2011; Murphy 2013), cross professional learning perspectives (e.g. Stronach et al. 2002; Burn and Edwards 2007; Edwards et al. 2009), early-career cross professional perspectives (e.g. Le Maistre et al. 2006; Eraut 2007) and early-career cross professional perspectives that include consideration of the learning of beginning teachers (e.g. Darling-Hammond et al. 1999; Grossman et al. 2007; Grossman et al. 2009; Ronfeldt and Grossman 2008). Loosely locating my study within the combined ambits of these closely-related fields of study crystallises the particularities of beginning teaching, thus rendering them more evident and illuminating. As a result, the shaping of beginning teacher identity relates more closely to the shaping of beginning identities in other spheres of life, thus making the shaping of teacher identity more relevant and worthy of study. Of note, in this respect, is the publication, in July 2013, of a study of the 84 first-time deputies (TDs) that entered Dáil Eireann (Irish parliament) in 2011. The TDs were studied during their first year as members of Dáil Eireann (Murphy 2013).

While acknowledging that the concept of transferability (Mertens 2010, p.430) rather than generalisability more appropriately applies to my study, methodologically, the significance of my study stems from the manner in which it succeeds to simultaneously subscribe to both the principles of 'particularisability' and 'generalisability'.

Particular, in the first instance, in being located in the specific context of the Irish primary school system, my research project can also be considered to adhere to the

principle of particularisability in its recognition of the intrinsic value of each individual case. Therefore, Stake's advice (2005, p. 457) of not losing sight of that which is unique about each case, in an effort to find similarities with other cases, is heeded. Aided by the selection of "maximum variation cases" (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 230), my study captures local variation among the nine research participants through fine-grained descriptions of settings and actions, and through interpretation of how individual beginning teachers make sense of their contexts and activities. My research undertaking seeks to describe, analyse, and interpret features in each of nine research settings, preserving their individual complexities and communicating the individual perspectives of the nine research participants (Lave 1996, pp. 161-162; Borko et al. 2007, p. 4). Told in vignettes and fragments of story, my task is to re-create the moment as a beginning teacher lived it. In doing so, my objective is to illustrate how the particular encompasses and reveals the universal, how in a single case the complexity of more general processes and patterns is manifested (Kelchtermans 2008, p. 29; Thomas 2011, 2012). Thus, viewed in terms of 'this story, in this place, at this time', the study seeks to tell the stories of particular beginners and, in doing so, to convince the reader that particular stories express a wider truth.

Simultaneously, the capacity of the research undertaking to successfully subscribe to the principle of generalisability is a function of the theoretical approach adopted throughout (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 233; Yin 2009, pp. 130-131). This involved devising a theoretically informed conceptual framework to deductively guide the collection of interview data, undertake a theoretically informed reading of interview transcripts and digital diary entries, and draw connections between the data and extant theory on the shaping of identity. Employing a theoretically-informed,

deductive approach, helps to address a central limitation of research in the interpretive genre i.e. the lack of shared conceptual frameworks and designs. This limitation makes it a challenging task to aggregate claims and to draw comparisons across studies, even when those studies are of similar phenomena (Borko et al. 2007, p. 5).

Substantive theories are sets of propositions that together describe and explain a phenomenon being studied. These propositions are at a higher level of abstraction than the specific facts and empirical data arising from the phenomenon. Substantive theory explains data via a process of deduction. When generalisability is a goal, it is necessary for the analysis of the case study data to be conducted at a sufficient level of abstraction. The more abstract the concept, the more generalisable it is. Thus, context-specific empirical data is rendered intelligible to a wider audience by virtue of the deductive exercise involved in connecting data to theoretical abstractions (Punch 2009, p. 20 and p. 122). Alternatively, McNally and Blake (2010a, 2010b) are of the view that "applying theory to practice can all too often fail to recognise the complexity of a situation and so stay remote from the actual context of that practice" (2010b, p. 13). Thus, their resorting to building theory "from the ground" (2010b, p. 13), results in the under-theorisation of otherwise excellent work, conducted in England and Scotland, on the dimensional nature of beginning teacher identity shaping (Thomas and James 2006). My study, however, subscribes to the view that while studying the lives of beginning teachers implies recognition of the specificity, practicality and value of their personal knowledge, the role of formal theory should not be reduced or eliminated (Kelchtermans 2008, p. 30). Instead, theoretical frameworks play an indispensable role in collecting and analysing data, as explanation is aided by virtue of having theoretical propositions act as a form of lingua franca. In

this way, the particular encompasses and reveals the universal; in a single beginning teacher case, the complexity of more general processes and patters is manifested. Drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives - i.e. sociocultural theories, activity theory, figured worlds theory, dialogical self theory - the claims of my research undertaking are set in a wider context of theoretically informed current themes and preoccupations relating to the mutually constitutive dynamic between the inherent multidimensionality of workplace experience and the shaping of emergent identities. Thus, the theorised nature of the present undertaking, and the generation of theoretically informed claims, represent an extension of the work of McNally and Blake (2010a, 2010b) and constitute a significant contribution on the part of my study.

My study is also methodologically significant in how it deploys a remarkably obvious, yet under-utilised, data collection instrument, digital diary, to successfully complement a more commonly utilised data collection instrument; individual, face-to-face semi-structured interview. Despite its potential, solicited digital diaries are a much under-utilised source of information on learning to teach. In a review of over twenty studies on beginning teaching, post-graduation, none utilised a diary methodology. In Holland, Meirink et al. (2007), Meirink et al. (2009) and Bakkenes et al. (2010) demonstrate the value of utilising digital logs in studies of experienced teachers. With regard to researching beginning teacher experience, e-mail communication has been utilised in England (Kyriacou and Kunc 2007; Hobson 2009), USA, (Shoffner 2011) and Norway (Jakhelln 2011). Additionally, Strogilos et al. (2012) utilise electronic reflective journals to describe the experiences of beginning special education teachers in mainstream schools in Greece.

In an Irish context, Morgan and Kitching (2007) and Kitching et al. (2009) demonstrate the efficacy of using solicited diary writing as a means of accessing the worlds of beginning teachers, as do Killeavy and Moloney (2010) in an investigation of the use of electronic journals [blogging] to support beginning teachers in developing a reflective capability within peer support networks. In gleaning the perspectives of beginning teachers via solicited diary writing my study seeks to extend that methodological foothold.

1.7 Study limitations

As with research projects generally, limitations are inherently a part of all aspects of my research undertaking. Firstly, concerns surround the analytic process. Conceptually, the choice of four sets of, albeit closely-related, sensitising principles, based on sociocultural theories, activity theory, figured worlds theory, and dialogical self theory, prove challenging to marshal. Secondly, the robustness of my study would have been enhanced, had the duration of the study been extended. Thirdly, despite reassurances (e.g. Bassey 1999; Stake 2005; Flyvbjerg 2006; Yin 2009; Simons 2009; Thomas 2011, 2012), the chosen multiple-case design still possesses inbuilt limitations, particularly in relation to the size and composition of the study sample, with consequent implications for the generalisability or transferability of research claims. Fourthly, limitations attach to the chosen methods of data collection; semi-structured individual interviews, solicited digital logs and story-line method. Fifthly, the 'power dynamic' at the heart of the study, between me, as researcher, and the beginning teacher participants, may have been exacerbated by the choice of my university-based, workplace office, as the 'setting' for the majority of individual

interviews. Finally, studies conceived within the interpretative genre possess in-built limitations with respect to the transferability of claims.

Nonetheless, whatever conceptual and methodological limitations attach to the project, I am both consoled and inspired by Michael Huberman's advice to Geert Kelchtermans when the latter was still a PhD student; "life is long, let research be short," meaning: don't try to achieve all your research ambitions in one project. Make choices, set an agenda, carry it out, finish it, and learn from it, and take what you have learned from that one project into your design of the next one (Kelchtermans 2008, p. 29). Equally consoling is Shulman's conclusion that while particular research undertakings illuminate some aspects of teaching while leaving others in the dark "no one has all the lines in the Great Conversation" (1986, p. 14 cited in Cochran-Smith 2012a, p. 101).

1.8 Thesis overview

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 furnishes an in-depth review of the literature relating to the shaping of identity among beginning teachers. A guiding theoretical framework draws on a range of theoretical perspectives; sociocultural theories; activity theory; figured worlds theory; and, dialogical self theory. Together, these theoretical perspectives provide a richer view of the shaping of beginning teacher identity than either could offer in isolation. Furthermore, the shaping of beginning identity is conceived of in dimensional terms. A framework composed of three dimensions is devised, namely, contextual; emotional; temporo-spatial. Each dimension helps illuminate the actuality of identity shaping while beginning to teach.

In Chapter 3, a detailed outline of the methodological elements of the undertaking is furnished. A comprehensive account, pertaining to the selection of participants, and the collection and analysis of data, is provided. In doing so, I heed Punch's (2009, p. 8) advice of not viewing method as a codification of procedures, but rather as information about actual ways of working. As such, the methodological account provided is not reduced to a set of mechanical steps governing the fieldwork elements of the research undertaking. Instead, the more technical, methodological aspects are simplified and the logic behind them is provided. Therefore, as well as providing a "how it was done" account, understanding is stressed. The conventions of the Harvard (Name-Date) referencing style are adhered to in my study.

Respectively, in Chapter 4, Chapter 5, and Chapter 6, data analysis is organised as per the dimensional framework outlined in Chapter 2 i.e. contextual; emotional; temporo-spatial. Further elaboration of themes addressed in the literature review chapter [Chapter 2], occur at the analysis stage, as I engage with narrative accounts and experiential vignettes arising from the data set. The use of a dimensional model fragments the integrated learning experiences of beginning teachers into constituent parts for the purpose of analysis. However, it is acknowledged that the actual journey articulated by each beginning teacher participant is a more complex whole than the sum of its parts.

The concluding chapter, Chapter 7, adheres to the following layout. Firstly, having outlined the theoretical stance adopted in my study, key empirically-based claims are synthesised with conceptual underpinnings, or 'big ideas', derived from the literature pertaining to the shaping of beginning teacher identity. Secondly, with research,

policy making and teacher education practices in mind, a range of implications, arising from these claims, are detailed. Thirdly, theoretical and methodological contributions deriving from my research are outlined. Fourthly, the rationales for pursuing particular research directions in the future are explained. The concluding section of the chapter contains a number of succinctly expressed, reflexive 'final words'.

1.9 Researcher's motivations

Among my motivations for choosing beginning teaching as a topic of study, the most influential are rooted in my twenty six year career as a primary school teacher. A member of the first cohort of trainee-teachers to participate in the three-year Bachelor of Education degree course in St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin, I began my teaching career on 1 July 1977 in an all-boys primary school, located in a County Cork town. Subsequently, in September 1982, I transferred to a newly-established, mixed gender, primary school on the northern fringes of Cork City. Apart from the four-year time period between 1987 and 1991, when I availed of the provisions of a public service leave-of-absence scheme, I taught in this school until November 2001. Between that time and September 2007, when I commenced employment as a lecturer in University College Cork, my final years as a primary teacher were spent in a newly-established, mixed gender school on the southern fringes of Cork City. While different from each other in some respects, not least in terms of the socio-economic profile of the respective school hinterlands, all three primary schools were alike in being large, urban-based establishments. While, at all three schools, I experienced the stresses and anxieties that inevitably arise from the demands of a teaching life, in the main, I thoroughly enjoyed my lengthy career as a primary school teacher.

Throughout my teaching career, I have always been exercised by the beginning teaching career phase. This arises for two reasons. Firstly, for a variety of positive and negative reasons, my own beginning experiences as a teacher remain indelibly stored in my memory. Secondly, a function of the size of each of the three schools in which I taught, I worked with a large number of newly graduated, beginning teacher colleagues. Their beginning experiences were also part of my daily reality.

My own experiences as a beginning teacher were demanding for a number of reasons. As a twenty year old beginner, I was essentially "on [my] own and presumed expert" (Kardos and Johnson 2007), granted sole responsibility for forty five, eight year old boys. All situations are relative of course and teachers from earlier eras would consider my beginning class size and conditions as representing an improvement over their beginning experiences. Brian MacMahon, for instance, describes the era during which he began his long and distinguished teaching career as "a time of dreadful squalor" (MacMahon 1992, p.7). While my first school was a newly-built, attractively sited, well managed establishment, the dominant culture is best described as resembling a "veteran-oriented professional culture" (Kardos and Johnson 2007, p. 2087). Therefore, although my more experienced colleagues were welcoming and congenial, professional norms of privacy and autonomy prevailed. In this respect, my beginning school was no different from the vast majority of primary schools in Ireland at that time. The degree to which the school could be described as "veteran-oriented" is evidenced by the fact that I, as the newest recruit, was assigned, what by common consent was the most difficult posting in the school. My first class contained the most disruptive pupil in the entire school. My having to face the rigours of the first round of the then two-year probationary process did not feature as a mitigating

circumstance! In subsequent years, all other staff members refused to teach the pupil in question, thus forcing the school authorities to secure an alternative educational setting to resolve the issue. However, my feelings vis-à-vis these beginning experiences are very much a function of hindsight and were not issues to be broached at the time with my then principal. Summoning up all my reserves of resilience and fortitude, I managed to prevail. Yet, my bewilderment, at the end of the first day of my beginning year as a teacher, has motivated me, more than three decades later, to choose beginning teaching as the focus of this doctoral study.

Subsequently, as my teaching career progressed, my own beginning experiences had sensitised me to be alert to the experiences of my numerous beginning colleagues. Throughout the 1980's and 1990's, many beginning teacher colleagues would have greatly benefited had mentoring help been available to them. However, the dominant prevailing view was that programmes of initial teacher education, or 'teacher training', as commonly termed, delivered graduates who were fully capable of functioning as teachers. The, well neigh, exclusively evaluative and individualistic probationary process, only served to reinforce this belief.

For many years, however, the absence of any school-based structure which would have facilitated the career entry of our newest recruits or, at least, would have granted 'permission' to school personnel to remedy a situation where a beginning teacher was experiencing significant difficulties in class, was a constant source of frustration to me. Motivated, usually by the impending visit of an inspector, or in reaction to parental complaints, in a small number of cases, during my tenure as a teacher, the principal or a senior teacher had to intervene directly in the classroom of a beginning

teacher. My memory of those interventions is that they were perceived as equivalent to a form of public humiliation for the beginner. This reaction was largely due to a perception of school as 'work place' rather than 'learning place' (Conway et al. 2014) and to a school staff possessing only a weak collective sense of itself as constituting a learning community, a function, in turn, of the dominance of long-entrenched professional norms of privacy and autonomy. I was, therefore, in 2003, during the final phase of my primary teaching career, eager to enlist as a mentor with the newly-established National Pilot Project on Teacher Induction (NPPTI). Despite the shortcomings attaching to the NPPTI initiative, not least having inadequate time to devote to my mentoring role due to my full-time teaching duties, I genuinely sensed among teaching colleagues the beginnings of a belief that the school community as a whole bears responsibility for the quality of learning experienced by its newest teaching recruits. My hope is that it augers well for future beginning teachers in our schools.

Acknowledgement, on the part of the Teaching Council (2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b, 2013), of the developmental needs of beginning teachers, ensures that my research undertaking is both relevant and timely. Furthermore, the assumption, on the part of the Teaching Council, in September 2012, of overall responsibility for the induction and probation of beginning teachers, allied to the publication, in March 2013, of the *Droichead* initiative on induction and probation (Teaching Council 2013), to be piloted over the period 2013-2015, pending a positive response from INTO members during the autumn of 2013, only serves to heighten the relevance and timeliness of my research.

1.10 Doctoral timeline

I am part of the founding Cohort PhD in Education group at University College Cork, which first assembled in September 2008. This thesis represents the summation of the wide range of cohort-related activities undertaken in the intervening period.

While stressing the recursive, iterative nature of the undertaking, Table 1B presents an overview of the major 'milestones' which marked my four and a half year doctoral journey.

Table 1B Doctoral timeline

Sept. 2008 – July 2009	**Sept. 2009 – Dec. 2009**	**Jan. 2010 – June 2010**	**August 2010 – June 2011**	**September 2011 – July 2013**
Initial reading and assignment work - conceptual and methodological Preparation of thesis proposal	Refinement of thesis proposal and research methodology	Recruitment of approx. 30 research volunteers Repeated redrafting of thesis chapters	Selection of final research participants. Fieldwork phase of study - data collection	Data analysis and successive redrafting of all thesis chapters

1.11 Conclusion

Non-linear and ongoing, the shaping of an identity or professional self is strenuous and complex. However, though defined and explored in a multitude of ways, developing a strong sense of identity as a teacher is crucial to the well-being of new members of the profession. As a result, my research undertaking focuses on the transformative search by beginning primary teachers for their teaching identities throughout the course of their first year in the workplace, post-graduation. Specifically, the mutually constitutive dynamic between the inherent dimensionality of first-year workplace experience, post-graduation, and the shaping of beginning teachers' identities, is the focus of my research.

This introductory chapter, Chapter 1, outlined information relating to a number of areas, important to my study, namely; purpose of research, research perspectives and focus, research contexts, scope of research, design and methodology, scholarly significance, study limitations, thesis overview, researcher's motivations and doctoral study timeline. The next chapter, Chapter 2, furnishes an in-depth review of literature pertaining to the shaping of identity, outlines a multi-perspectival theoretical framework devised to guide my research, and details the dimensional approach adopted to help illuminate the actuality of identity shaping while beginning to teach.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Over recent decades, identity has become one of the most widely used terms in the social sciences and humanities (Wetherell 2010). Yet examination of the literature suggests there is no clear, consensual definition of identity and the multitude of elements covered by the concept appears at times overwhelming. Notoriously elusive, the variety of often contradictory directions in identity studies, the heavy-duty reflexivity identity requires, and scholarly unease over definition and boundaries, mean that identity studies constitute a field of significant theoretical and methodological complexity, a site of continuous unsettled argument. Few concepts, however, have been as generative; the study of identity persists and prospers (Wetherell 2010).

Developing a strong sense of a professional identity as a teacher, Thomas and Beauchamp (2011) state, is crucial to the well-being of new members of the profession. Though defined and explored in a multitude of ways (Beijaard et al. 2004; Beauchamp and Thomas 2009, pp. 175-6), over recent years a burgeoning of research on teacher identity shaping generally (Zembylas 2003a, 2003b; Menter 2008; Akkerman and Meijer 2011), has deepened and complicated our understanding of the role of identity in learning to teach. As a result, we possess a keener appreciation that the formulation of an identity or professional self is a strenuous, complex, continuous and messy process, as beginning teachers make multiple decisions, wrestle with the resulting consequences, and search for ways to effectively articulate their new roles e.g. Flores and Day 2006; Rodgers and Scott 2008; Hamman et al. 2010; Beauchamp and Thomas 2011; Thomas and Beauchamp 2011; Ruohotie-Lyhty 2013.

Providing a framework for beginners "to construct their own ideas of 'how to be', 'how to act' and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society" (Sachs 2003 cited in Hall et al. 2012, p. 3), the dynamic, non-linear and ongoing nature of beginning teacher identity is captured in Britzman's (2003) conception of learning to teach as a 'process of becoming'. Grappling with the notion of how one's identity progressively shifts in a 'process of becoming', is a complex undertaking. As a result, the terms used to characterise the dynamic nature of identity are inconsistent across the literature. Examples include, 'development', 'construction', 'formation', 'making', 'creating' and 'building' (Beauchamp and Thomas 2009, p.178). Following the example of others (e.g. Sugrue 2004; Flores and Day 2006), I have chosen to utilise the term 'shaping identity' in my study, in recognition of the symbiotic relationship between identity and its shaping influences, and acknowledging the enmeshed contribution of structure and agency to the dynamic character of identity (Beauchamp and Thomas 2009, p. 178) and the sense of 'embodiment' related to identity (Alsup 2006, p. 185). An embodied view of learning is strongly represented in the literature on workplace learning, with a focus on learning how to do a job and become part of a workplace community (Hodkinson et al. 2008, p. 31). While freely acknowledging the importance of the mental or cognitive dimension of learning, an embodied view of learning foregrounds other interrelated dimensions of learning.

Sociocultural and activity theoretical perspectives on learning and development, informed the selection of literature for review in the current chapter, and, ultimately, the theoretical framing of my study. Additionally, my participation on the Cohort PhD in Education programme, at University College Cork, significantly influenced the

selection process e.g. Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998; Rogoff 2003, 2008; Engeström 2001. As my study progressed, the influence of additional theoretical perspectives assumed increasing prominence i.e. figured worlds theory (Holland et al. 1998) and dialogical self theory (Akkerman and Meijer 2011). With respect to the selection of literature on beginning teaching, sources were gleaned from a number of influential meta-analyses pertaining to the field e.g. Cameron 2007; Hobson et al. 2009; Wang et al. 2008; Ingersoll and Strong 2011. Overarchingly, though, the influence of my thesis supervisor, Dr Paul Conway, proved pivotal with respect to my selecting ground breaking, non-derivative beginning teacher-related material. As a result, my study is significantly influenced by the work of a number of key authors who undertook empirical studies and/or generative reviews of beginning teacher development: Beauchamp and Thomas, Feiman-Nemser, Flores, Grossman, Johnson and Kardos, Kelchtermans, McNally and Blake, and Sugrue.

2.1 Shaping beginning identity: A dimensional approach

In devising a framework to help marshal data pertaining to the transformative search for their teaching identities by the nine beginning teachers participating in my study, I have loosely borrowed from Rodgers and Scott (2008, p.733), who state that contemporary conceptions of identity share a number of basic assumptions, and from McNally et al. (2010), who posit that for the beginner in teaching, the trajectory of identity shaping is best understood as a multidimensional experience, moving in one main direction, namely establishment as a teacher. Therefore, in my study, the shaping of beginning identity is conceived of in dimensional terms. Pivotal to understanding the shaping of identity in the beginner, a framework composed of three dimensions of beginning teacher experience is devised, namely: contextual;

emotional; temporo-spatial. Contained within each dimension of experience are a number of sub-themes that help illuminate the actuality of identity shaping while beginning to teach.

The use of a dimensional model fragments the integrated learning experiences of beginning teachers into constituent parts for the purpose of analysis. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that the actual journey articulated by each participant is a more complex whole than the sum of its parts; dimensions and sub-themes are enmeshed, overlap, compete, and vary in their intensity and applicability to particular participants and contexts, and from one point during the initial year of occupational experience to another. Separable for analytical purposes, but not separate in reality, in one and the same event several dimensions of beginner experience can be at stake simultaneously. Additionally, the adoption of a dimensional approach does not obscure the integrity and individual character of each beginning teacher's personal narrative and the sense of individual identity shaping readily apparent in the interview transcripts and digital logs.

The selected dimensional model informs the organisational layout of the present literature review chapter. Within the ambit of each dimension, themes pertaining to, respectively, the contextual, emotional, and temporo-spatial realms of beginning teaching are discussed. Subsequently, in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, respectively, data analysis is similarly organised along these dimensional lines. Further elaboration of themes treated in the present literature review will occur at the analysis stage, as I engage with narrative accounts and experiential vignettes arising from the data set. Also conceivable is the possibility of additional issues arising for discussion during the course of data analysis.

2.1.1 'Knowing how to teach' or 'being someone who teaches'?

Beginning teaching is dependent on a wide range of knowledge, competences and skills. These include, among others, coming to terms with new locations, physical layouts, classroom management, subject knowledge, teaching techniques, resources, and procedures. Clearly, beginning teaching it is not simply about identity shaping (McNally et al. 2008). Nevertheless, in extending the tradition of merely focusing on teachers' acquisition of 'assets', such as knowledge and competences, as the basis of professional development, identity studies go beyond learning 'to know how to teach' and focus on learning 'to be someone who teaches' (Kelchtermans and Hamilton 2004 cited in Akkerman and Meijer 2011, p. 317). For a beginning teacher, achieving a sense of being 'someone who teaches' involves a process of making one's own sense of a new and complex world, of belonging and being accepted in it and of thus gaining a teacher identity. Of importance in the shaping of identity is how beginning teachers view themselves as teachers; how beginning teachers view others that they professionally engage with; and how beginning teachers believe they are perceived by others. Thus, as with McNally et al. (2008, p. 11), my study subscribes to the view that beginning teaching is as much about the shaping of identity, the becoming of a certain kind of person, as it is about the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

2.2 Theoretical framework

In framing my study, a guiding theoretical framework emerged from a review of conceptual and empirical practice-based literature, informed by the tenets of sociocultural theories (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998; Sfard 1998; Putnam and Borko 2000; Rogoff 2003, 2008; Hodkinson et al. 2008), activity theory

(Engeström 1987, 1999, 2001), figured worlds theory (Holland et al. 1998) and dialogical self theory (Hermans 1996, 2012; Akkerman and Meijer 2011). As all these theories emanate from the broad church that is the cultural-historical tradition and reflect the assumptions of that tradition, these theories are synergistic and when utilised together provide a richer view of the shaping of beginning teacher identities than either could offer in isolation. Together they act as deductive, interrogative instruments throughout (Brenner 2006, p. 361), furnishing a set of analytical approaches that facilitate an understanding of the complexities inherent to the shaping of beginning teacher identity in the workplace. Utilised for their broad-based animating principles, rather than exhaustively or in fine-grained fashion, the incorporation of sociocultural understandings of learning as fundamentally situative, relational and participative, allied to the utilisation of the foundational principles and individual components of activity theory, figured worlds theory, and dialogical self theory, help illuminate the dimensional nature of beginning teacher identity shaping, as perceived by the research informants.

In the following subsections, the central tenets of these closely related theoretical perspectives are outlined.

2.3 Sociocultural understandings of identity shaping

Sociocultural theories are rooted in the cultural-historical tradition instigated by the Russian psychologists Vygotsky, Leont'ev and Luria. More recently, sociocultural theories have been developed further in the works of, among others, Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998). A central thesis of sociocultural theories is of understanding learning in a historical perspective and based on participative

interaction with the cultural environment. The learner is conceived as a cultural and historical subject, situated within, and constituted by, a network of social relationships and interaction within the culture in question (Kaartinen 2009). As such, context and knowledge are considered as reciprocal. Consequently, in my study, the shaping of beginners' identities cannot be considered in isolation from the network of values, relationships and artefacts, which constitute a range of contexts of significance to the shaping process. In outlining that learning possesses *situated, social,* and *distributed* dimensions, Putnam and Borko (2000, pp. 4-5) furnish an overview of the basic principles of sociocultural theories.

The notion that learning is *situated* challenges the traditional cognitive understanding of learning as taking place within the individual mind and principally concerned with the acquisition of knowledge deemed useful in other contexts. In advancing a situative perspective, sociocultural theorists (e.g. Sfard 1998) challenge this assumption and posit, instead, that the context within which learning takes place is an integral part of the learning *per se*.

The idea of learning as *social* represents a shift from an individualistic understanding of learning, whereby the role of others in the learning space was conceived as being merely supportive of the individual construction of knowledge, towards an understanding that interacting with others in one's learning context "are major determinants of both what is learned and how learning takes place" (Putnam and Borko 2000, p. 5). In this way, Putnam and Borko (2000) note, individuals appropriate as their own the conceptual tools necessary to make sense of experiences within a community of practice. Thus, rather than being the sole function of direct

instruction, the notion that learning is social posits that, in participating in the practices and discourses of a community, individuals engage in learning as a function of being acculturated into that community's norms. Additionally, learning is not unidirectional as "the community, too, changes through the ideas and ways of thinking its new members bring to the discourse" (p. 5). As with the situated notion of learning, understanding learning as social also involves a reciprocal component. For my research enquiry, the importance of the notion that learning is social, lies in the realisation that all aspects of school-based workplaces - cultural, organisational, practical, and conceptual - have power to influence, and, reciprocally, be influenced by the learning of beginning teachers. Therefore, my research enquiry concerns itself not only with how beginning teachers learn from their new workplace colleagues but also investigates the degree to which the practices of beginning teachers influence their more experienced colleagues.

Understanding learning as *distributed* relates to the sociocultural notion of cognition as "stretched over" or distributed between "the individual, other persons, and various artefacts such as physical and symbolic tools" (Putnam and Borko 2000, p. 5). In many workplace settings the distribution of cognition across employees and tools facilitates the accomplishment of tasks beyond the capacity of any individual employee. However, school-based workplaces are, typically, centres where commitment to such shared undertakings is, at best, variable. In this regard, Wenger (1998) suggests that resources and attention have been disproportionately focused on the development of teachers as individual practitioners, as opposed to members of local "communities of practice". As a result, my study is alert to the extent to which the workplace learning of beginning teachers can be considered to be distributed. In

sum, a research approach informed by the principles of sociocultural theories, serves as an eminently suitable generative lens through which to understand the shaping of beginning teacher identity through participation in workplace settings.

2.3.1 Unit of analysis in identity research

Conceptualisations in relation to the unit of analysis in identity research have evolved over time. In this regard, a division between the personal and the social created perhaps the most central puzzle in identity studies from the 1960's onwards. Identity was understood as a personal project, a striving for coherence rooted in individual biography, and also by the identity afforded by social location and social groups. Debates about how individual identity and social identity could be fused, how subjectivity and social relations yoked together, tended to rest on profound binary distinctions between 'interiors' and 'exteriors' to preserve both social determination and individual agency. However, in considering individual learners, and the respective learning cultures through which they learn, it is mistaken to conceive of learning cultures as external contexts within which individuals act and learn. Equally mistaken is an assumption that the learning cultures prevailing in workplaces sum up everything about the individuals within those cultures. Conceiving of the relationship between individual learners and learning cultures in these linear, binary ways distorts the relational reality between individuals and learning cultures. More recently, the unit of analysis in identity research has decisively changed. The debate has moved from choosing either the individual or the social environment as primary unit of analysis to discussing how the interrelatedness of the individual and the social should be conceptualised (e.g. Hermans 1996, 2012; Akkerman and Meijer 2011; Billett 2011). As a result, binary approaches have been intensely critiqued to an extent that it

is now difficult to investigate any aspect of identity without being struck by the extent to which the social is personally owned, and by the myriad of ways in which people make social locations psychological (Wetherell 2010).

2.3.2 Individual learners and learning cultures: Dispelling dualisms

Of particular importance to a research undertaking is the capacity of selected theoretical approaches to account for the individual and social dimensions of learning. In the case of my study, how the shaping of identity through learning in the workplace can be theorised and examined as an experience by individuals, within socially situated activities, and in a reciprocal interactive manner, merits attention. Both the social situatedness of that learning and the agency of the individual in the learning process, need to be considered. In this regard, Cairns (2011) offers some thoughts on ways to think differently about the intersections that individual learners face in workplace learning situations and how societal elements may be included in the way workplace learning takes place. To this end, the argument has recently developed that agency and the social are interactive, with the individual learner having more control as an agentic being in interaction with the social environment and with others in the learning process. In arguing that it is mistaken to overlook the significance of individual learners, Billett (2011) suggests strongly that it is time for the significance of personal agency and self to figure more prominently in theories of workplace learning and he presents his theoretical stance on the interactions (affordances) that operate between individual 'cognitive experience' and social experience and how these are negotiated in the workplace. Central to Billett's (2011) case is how individual engagement is based on 'relational interdependence with social agency' in workplaces. Learning in the workplace is, therefore, dually constituted with

workplace affordances and dispositions each playing their part. Billett's (2011) conclusion relates to individuals being active participants in 'remaking cultural practices' that arise and are involved in work and workplaces. The learner is not outside the system and is fully operational on, in and with the social situations and people in those systems. As such, learning occurs, Cairns (2011, p. 81) states, *through* the involvement and interaction of an agentic learner with the social system of the workplace and its influences and features.

Within a sociocultural view of learning, the Bourdieuian concept of habitus helps to keep in view both the individual and social nature of a person's learning. Habitus expresses the sense in which the individual is social. The habitus is a battery of socially acquired, durable, transposable but also mutable dispositions to all aspects of life that are often subconscious or tacit (Bourdieu 1977 cited in Hodkinson et al. 2008, p. 38). The habitus can be viewed as social structures operating within and through individuals, rather than something residing outside an individual**.** For Bourdieu, Hager (2011) states, rather than individuals being influenced by and, in turn, influencing the social structures around them, the social structures are themselves represented through individuals, in their habitus. Individual persons are viewed as reciprocal parts of the social context in which they learn, and vice versa. Habitus becomes a way of expressing the unitary integration of social structures and individual persons, and agency and structure both have significant, but complementary roles. In reality, individuals influence and are part of learning cultures just as learning cultures influence and are part of individuals. The individual and social dimensions of learning are, accordingly, perceived as mutually constitutive. The conceptualisation, as mutually constitutive, of identity and the institutional settings in which identity is

activated through participation-in-practice, develops a stronger sense of the active person, shaping as well as being shaped. Accordingly, though the school-based learning cultures of my study may be highly immersing and intensively defining, this should not prevent us from acknowledging the individuality of the beginning teacher research participants. Thus, in advancing the view that new teachers both shape and are shaped by their work context, my study adopts an interactionist approach towards the shaping of beginning teacher identity (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Flores 2006; Flores and Day 2006).

In a similar fashion, understanding learning as embodied combines participatory approaches with a fully developed individual perspective and helps to dispel dualistic, dichotomous conceptualisations of the individual and the social, and structure and agency. In conceiving of learning as embodied, we understand that individuals learn as social individuals, that those social individuals contribute to the construction of any learning cultures they participate in, that agency is always structured, and that structures are constructed and reconstructed partly through agency, and that social structures interpenetrate individual and group dispositions (the habitus), as well as the cultural practices of any location or field. Consequently, for my study, the integration of structure and agency in this manner entails recognition of the dangers of examining learning and identity shaping only at one scale e.g. within the confines of individual, school-based workplaces. Above all, understanding learning as embodied draws attention to the relational nature of learning and to the implications of that relationality. Far from being a product or substance, learning is a changing relational web. The learner is part of this changing relational web, a relational web in a process of ongoing change. The relational nature of workplace learning ensures that no single

factor can be identified as being the most important (Evans et al. 2006, p. 97). Therefore, a principal implication of the relational complexity of workplaces is that it precludes recourse to uniform ways of understanding and improving learning that are broadly universal. As workplace learning is inherently part of and shaped by its context, uniform prescriptions in all specified situations usually invite unintended consequences. With respect to the focus of my study, these conceptualisations lead to enhanced understandings of the interrelatedness of workplace learning and the shaping of beginning teacher identity (Rodgers and Scott 2008; Hamman et al. 2010; Czerniawski 2011).

2.3.3 Reification, agency and the shaping of identity

Unlike poststructuralist approaches, which do not prioritise the role of agency, sociocultural perspectives understand teacher identity in terms of an agency evident at the centre of participative actions, necessary to the shaping of that identity (Zembylas 2003a, p. 224). Specifically, sociocultural understandings view participation, the 'working out' necessary for the emergence of identity, as mediated by two, inevitable and necessary, dynamically relating forces: reified, taken-for-granted institutional practices, and actors' agentic, negotiative capabilities (Rogoff 2003 cited in Hall et al. 2012, p. 2). Growth occurs as identity is shaped in the space between the structural reifications of practice and an individual's participative agency within that context; in the "shifting space where narratives of subjectivity meet the narratives of culture" (Zembylas 2003a, p. 221). Thus, identity shaping involves a purposive encounter between individual choices and the arrangements, routines and practices employed "in cultural spaces involving other people, ideas, histories, relationships, resources,

expectations, constraints and so on" (Hall et al. 2012, p. 3). Moreover, the role of 'power relations', in mediating these encounters, is important.

Never autonomous or independent, all actors are variously extended or constrained by the exigencies - real and imagined - of specific locations, as they engage in negotiating an identity. Differences in position and power ensure a differential effect among participants with regard to their respective capacities to shape and change a culture. Cultures, then, are both structured and structuring, and individuals' actions are neither totally determined by the confines of a learning culture, nor are they totally free (Bourdieu 1977 cited in Hodkinson et al. 2008, p. 34). Specifically, of particular importance in the 'field' of beginning teaching is the manner in which power is operationalised between a beginning teacher and others whose positions are defined relationally vis-à-vis the beginning teacher: staff colleagues, mentor(s), school principal, management body, school inspector, parents and National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) facilitators. As such, the balance between reification and participation determines the shape of emergent identities. A relational imbalance between the two compromises the participative meaning making processes necessary for the authoring of a self (Hall et al. 2012, p. 3). As a result, my study is sensitive to the balance between reification and participation in the shaping of beginning teacher identities.

2.4 Activity Theory and identity shaping

In spite of a wealth of theoretical contributions conceptualising learning as social, contextualised and participative (e.g. Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998), less contributions exist to aid researchers attempting to characterise a participatory unit of activity. The conceptualisation of learning as a contextualised or situated act, while attractive in theory, becomes problematic when attempting to describe individual functioning in a particular context (Barab et al. 2004, p. 199). Therefore, defining the participatory unit is a core challenge facing researchers. In addressing this challenge, I have chosen Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), commonly shortened to Activity Theory (AT), to help analyse the dynamic interplay between structural, social and cultural factors and the ongoing shaping of beginning teachers' identities, arising from participation in beginning-related activities within both school-based and wider, out-of-school participatory units.

The term 'cultural-historical' refers to the view that human development, the shaping of identity in the case of my study, can only be understood in a historical perspective and based on interaction with the cultural environment. Derived from the Vygotskian cultural-historical tradition in psychology, the work of Engeström (1987, 1999, 2001) represents a significant contemporary elaboration of the theory. Specifically, Engeström (1987, 1999, 2001) provides a triangular schematic for the structure of activity that can be described as follows. The most basic relations entail a *subject* (individual or group) orientated to transform some *object* (outward goal, concrete purpose, or objectified motive) using a cultural-historically constructed *tool* (material or conceptual). Engeström's (1987, 1999, 2001) contribution are represented by those elements which complete the schematic (Diagram 2.1).

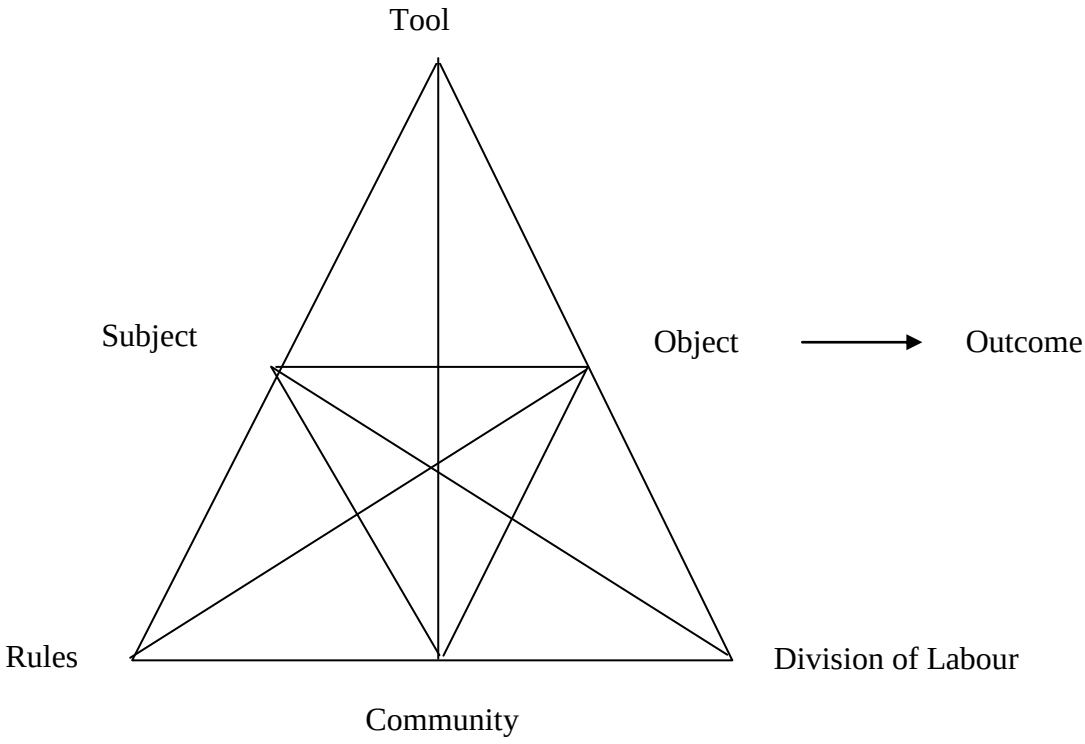


Diagram 2.1 Engeström's activity system schematic

These include the components of community (e.g. workplace settings) and *outcome* (the intended or unintended consequences of activity). The *subject* relates to the *community* via *rules* (norms and conventions of behaviour), while the *community* relates to the *object* via a *division of labour* (organisation of processes related to the goal), and to the *subject* via *rules.* Engeström's (1987, 1999, 2001) reconceptualisation of Activity Theory, represented by the lower part of the triangle - i.e. *rules, community,* and *division of labour* - extends due recognition to the contextualised nature of activity (Diagram 2.1). Engeström's triangular representation of an activity system is utilised as a sensitising instrument in my study.

2.4.1 Five foundational principles of Activity Theory

Activity Theory may be summarised with the help of five foundational principles (Engeström 2001, pp.136-137). These five principles relate to the internal dynamics of activity systems. All five principles are utilised in my study to help research the shaping of beginning teacher identity.

The five principles of Activity Theory are:

1) A collective, artifact-mediated and object-oriented activity system is the prime unit of analysis.

2) Multi-voicedness

3) Historicity

4) Contradictions

5) Expansive transformation

In elaborating upon these five principles, the manner in which each is deployed in my study is detailed.

1) The first principle of Activity Theory posits that the primary unit of analysis is not the isolated individual but rather "a collective, artifact-mediated and object-oriented activity system" (Engeström 2001, p. 136). The concept of 'activity' focuses attention on complex interrelations between individual subjects and their respective communities, notwithstanding Bakhurst's (2009) reservation regarding what the concept "really amounts to" (p. 198). Accordingly, activity, composed of goal-

directed actions undertaken to fulfil the object and implemented, in turn, through automatic operations, can only be adequately understood within its culturally and historically situated context.

Specifically, Activity Theory posits that human development relies on the appropriation of pre-existing cultural tools, that this appropriation occurs through social interchange and that, as a consequence of these dynamics, people grow into the frameworks for thinking afforded by the cultural practices and tools made available to them in the social settings of their development. Furthermore, the reciprocal, and balanced, nature of interrelating reified institutional practices and the agentic actions of beginning teachers is stressed. In sum, individual persons and social collectives are understood dialectically, that is, in relation to one another. Activity Theory, therefore, enables both an analysis of contexts as present in the institutional structures that influence everyday action, as well as in the meaning participants give to their interaction. Activity Theory is also predicated on the assumption that change is the only constant in an activity system. Accordingly, the constituents of activity are not fixed but dynamically change as conditions change. Each, historically formed, mediating component in an activity system (subject, tools, community etc.) is, therefore, open to continuous modification and reconstruction.

In my study, the unit of analysis selected for investigation is the school-based workplace setting of each research participant. In total, nine such workplace settings are investigated via the perspectives of participants. Crucially, though, I remain mindful that each research participant is part of other fields too, and has had an earlier learning life. In this respect, Barowy and Jouper (2004) place emphasis on what

participants bring to each new situation as a result of their previous participation in different, frequently related, activity systems. In my study, actions are understandable only when interpreted against the background of within-school and wider out-of-school contexts. Taking wider out-of-school contexts into account is crucial as individual beginning teachers are never just members of one activity system. Therefore, the shaping of their identities cannot be fully explained within the context of school-based systems alone.

2) The second principle of Activity Theory relates to the multi-voicedness of activity systems. Always a community of multiple points of view, traditions and interests, the division of labour in an activity creates different positions for the participants, the participants carry their own diverse histories, and the activity system itself carries multiple layers and strands of history engraved in its artifacts, rules and conventions. Therefore, the nine school-based activity systems of my study serve as settings which are construed differently by different stakeholders. Potentially a source of innovation and conflict, multi-voicedness also necessitates acts of dialogue and negotiation. In my study, participant perspective on the multi-voicedness inherent to school-based and wider out-of-school activity systems is gleaned

3) The third principle of Activity Theory concerns historicity. Activity systems take shape and get transformed over lengthy periods of time, and their problems and potentials can only be understood against their own history. History itself needs to be studied as the local history of the activity and its objects, and as the history of the theoretical ideas and tools that have shaped the activity. Tool-use, Ellis et al. (2010, p. 3) state, has a strongly historical dimension in that tools, whether material or

conceptual, have been imbued with meaning by past use and because new meanings can be embedded in them through present activity under evolving cultural conditions. Thus, Activity Theory facilitates an understanding of historically specific local practices, their objects, mediating artifacts, and social organisation. In the case of my study, beginning teaching is analysed against the history of its local, specifically Irish, transaction, and against wider, more global histories of beginning teaching experience and responses to that experience, employed and accumulated in the activity at a local level.

4) The fourth principle of Activity Theory relates to the central role of contradictions as sources of change and development. Contradictions are historically accumulating structural tensions, dilemmas, paradoxes and double-bind situations within activity systems. A function of their inherent dynamism, activity systems, such as workplaces and formal educational settings, are practically always in a process of working through a number of such contradictions. While distinct from conventional understandings of conflict (Barab et al. 2004), contradictions, Lee and Roth (2008, p. 297) opine, can give rise to disturbance, discoordination and conflict and can be experienced negatively by participants. Nonetheless, Activity Theory views contradictions as necessary sources of learning, development and change in systems; "such a multivoiced theory should not regard internal contradictions and debates as signs of weakness; rather, they are an essential feature of the theory" (Engeström 1999, p. 20). As well as being developmentally significant, contradictions facilitate the avoidance of dualism, subjectivism and reductionist simplifications (Roth 2004). While Engeström (2001) regards learning as occurring within activity systems because they continually throw up contradictions and tensions that need to be

resolved, Hager (2011, p.24) cautions against considering all learning at work as occurring from contradictions and tensions within the system. Nonetheless, despite reservations, Activity Theory helps facilitate the location and articulation of contradictions. Of four levels of contradiction identified in activity systems (Engeström 2001), primary and secondary contradictions relate, respectively, to tensions or dilemmas within each node and between constituent nodes (e.g. subject and tools) of the activity system. These contradictions exert an influence on the participants in an activity system and on the tasks performed therein. Beginning teachers, therefore, to varying degrees of awareness, operate within structural contradictions in their respective workplaces. Of particular interest to my study are the competing demands and tensions of this varied engagement that influence the shaping of a beginning teacher's identity and sense of development as a teacher.

My study, therefore, utilises both primary and secondary contradictions to illuminate the systemic dilemmas and pervasive tensions inherent in the shaping of beginning teachers' identities. For example, a contradiction characteristic of many school cultures lies in the contrast between the support needs of beginning teachers and their actual experience of working in a less-than-supportive environment. As a consequence, many beginning teachers are obliged to manifest high levels of self-reliance and individual initiative. A further contradiction relates to the clash between the values embodied in established and newly introduced workplace practices. Engeström (2001, p. 137) states that when an activity system adopts a new element from the outside (e.g. new technology, work practice) it frequently leads to an aggravated secondary contradiction when an existing, historically sedimented, element (e.g. rules, division of labour) reacts with the newly adopted practice. For

instance, a newly adopted initiative in the Irish primary school sector relates to arrangements surrounding the induction and probation of beginning teachers, as outlined, most recently, in Circular 0029/2012 (DES 2012c) and in the proposed *Droichead* pilot initiative (Teaching Council 2013). An emphasis on collaborative practice, contained in these policy documents, has the potential to clash with long-established, isolated work practices that have traditionally defined educational work settings in Ireland (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 1991). In this respect, my study attempts to determine if contradictions attach to the induction and mentoring of beginning teachers, especially as manifested in discontinuities between stated policy and enacted practice. Specifically, the study attempts to glean the perspectives of participants on continued adherence, on the part of their experienced colleagues, to established practices and work habits. In short, a possible contradiction between the rationalities of structure, as represented by newly-prescribed induction and mentoring arrangements, and culture, as represented by the exigencies of initiation, is investigated (Stronach 2010; Owen 2001).

5) The fifth principle of Activity Theory proclaims the possibility of expansive transformation in activity systems. Engeström (2011, p. 87) informs us that the expansion metaphor is chosen because the core idea of the principle of transformation is qualitatively different from the two learning metaphors, acquisition and participation, suggested by Sfard (1998). From the point of view of expansive learning, both acquisition-based and participation-based approaches have little to say about transformation and creation of culture. In expansive learning, however, learners learn something that is not yet there. In other words, the learners construct a new object for their collective activity, and implement this new object in practice. For

instance, as the contradictions of an activity system are aggravated, some individual participants begin to question and deviate from its established norms or taken-for-granted practices. In some cases, this escalates into collaborative envisioning and a deliberate collective change effort. An expansive transformation is accomplished when the object (motive) of the activity is reconceptualised to embrace a radically wider horizon of possibilities than in the previous mode of the activity. Through a dialogic process the object of the activity system is ongoingly constituted. It is an ever-evolving object whose constitution is in part shaped by and derives from the differing perspectives of participants within the activity system. For Engeström, Avis states (2009, p. 155), human agency is located in collective and dialogic practices lodged within (and across) activity systems. This serves to acknowledge the complexity and indeterminacy that surrounds such practices. With regard to the fifth principle of Activity Theory, my study focuses on the inherently transformative shaping of beginning teachers' identities throughout the course of their initial year in school-based workplaces. Thus, ongoing transformative processes characterised by temporal change, a function of the unanticipated and unpredictable ways that beginners emerge or become as teachers in the workplace, are foci of attention.

2.4.2 Capturing the complexities of identity shaping: Utilising Activity Theory

Although there is no accepted methodology for using Activity Theory (Barab et al. 2004, p. 207), and despite reservations expressed by Wardekker (2010, p. 243) that Engeström's models (2001) do not dovetail neatly with the specificity of educational situations, the theoretical approach is frequently used as a framing device in understanding complexities relating to roles and relationships in formal educational settings e.g. Smagorinsky et al. 2004; Barowy and Jouper 2004; Roth et al. 2004;

Haggarty and Postlethwaite 2009; Beauchamp et al. 2009; Feldman and Weiss 2010; Anthony et al. 2012; Fisher 2012; McNicholl and Blake 2013. Activity Theory assumes that human development is a function of action within social settings whose values embody the settings' cultural histories (Smagorinsky et al. 2004). A particular strength of Activity Theory, Owen (2001, p. 601) posits, is that it draws attention to history and change and the influence of contradictory structures in mediating everyday work activity. Accordingly, my study utilises Activity Theory, both conceptually and methodologically, to unveil complexities inherent to the shaping of beginning teachers' identities.

Conceptually, adopting an activity theoretical approach facilitates the deployment of a number of broad-based sociocultural principles through which to view the 'activity' of the beginning teacher. As the roots of both Activity Theory and sociocultural theories lie in the cultural-historical tradition, Activity Theory is enveloped within broader sociocultural principles and reflects the assumptions of that tradition. Therefore, complementary perspectives from both Activity Theory (e.g. tools, rules, community, division of labour) and sociocultural theories (e.g. learning as social, situated and distributed) are merged in the interests of accounting for the interconnected, interdependent, dynamic, mutually constitutive and ever-evolving relational complexities, tensions, dilemmas and contradictions inherent to beginning teacher identity shaping.

Methodologically, a powerful and frequently invoked use of Activity Theory is as an orientating device to structure the collection and arrangement of data from complex learning contexts (Barab et al. 2004, p. 207). The components of Engeström's (2001)

activity system triangle, i.e. *Subject, Tools, Object, Outcome, Rules, Community*, and *Division of Labour*, are used at all stages of my research undertaking:

- Initially, to inform the focus and design of interview schedules
- As 'buckets' for arranging data during the fieldwork stage
- Ultimately, to ensure a thorough analysis of the empirical evidence.

The utilisation of the principles and components of Activity Theory to structure the collection of interview data ensures that its use at the analysis stage is more robust (Appendix 2; Appendix 3; Appendix 4).

2.4.3 Guarding against the potential deficiencies of Activity Theory

Life, Barab et al. (2004) caution … "tends not to compartmentalise itself or act in ways that are always wholly consistent with our theoretical assumptions" (p. 209). Consequently, the limitations of any theoretical framework, used to analyse practice, must be acknowledged. In the case of Activity Theory, researchers need to be aware of a number of potential deficiencies attaching to the approach.

Firstly, when using Engeström's (2001) well defined triangular conceptualisations, the temptation of looking at any activity system as static in both time and structure is to be avoided. Barab et al. (2004, p. 210) assert that descriptions of an activity should convey a full sense of the activity as continually in the making, and of the segmented characterisation as being but a snapshot, designed to inform but ultimately obfuscating the numerous nested levels of interlocking activity that occur throughout the continuous making and remaking of the system. Barab et al. (2004) stress the

importance of treating the individual components of an activity system as acting transactively rather that interactively. Treating the components as interacting tends to conceive of each as separate entities, understood in isolation from their contextualised transactions. Alternatively, components should be considered as fundamentally transactive, interdependent and interconnected and "only remain separate in name or in researchers' minds, for in their materiality they are transformed continuously in relation to other components" (p. 209).

Secondly, predicated on Vygotsky's cultural-historical notion that the origins of human consciousness are found first in culture, activity theorists attempt to understand the nature of particular cultures and how people within them appropriate their surrounding culture's conceptions. A basic assumption of Activity Theory is that human development, for example, the shaping of a beginning teacher's identity through their emergence or becoming as a teacher, is a function of action within social settings whose values embody the settings' cultural histories. In this manner, beginning teachers are guided towards particular beliefs about teaching and learning through enculturation in practices informed by the cultural values of specific contexts. Therefore, an emphasis on context distinguishes Activity Theory from theoretical perspectives that assume that teaching is a solitary profession, shifting attention instead to the ways in which settings provide resources, opportunities and constraints that direct people towards particular ends. However, foregrounding the culturally embedded nature of human development carries the danger of privileging the system over the individual. Engeström's model of activity systems, Hodkinson et al. (2008, p. 37) maintain, marginalises individual learners and overlooks learner agency. On this view, individuals do not work qua individuals but as subjects of a collective activity. The privileging of a collectivist perspective continues to be of concern. For

example, Hager (2011, p. 24) states that the learner/system locus issue in Activity Theory remains unresolved and Engeström (2011, p. 99) acknowledges that a major challenge for Activity Theoretical approaches relate to conceptualising and characterising the forms of agency involved in expansive learning processes. In guarding against the privileging of a collectivist perspective, my study foregrounds the agentic actions of the beginning teacher participants.

Thirdly, real-world contexts are considerably more complicated than Engeström's (2001) triangular conceptualisations of well defined activity systems. In reality, individuals are never just members of one activity system. Therefore, the shaping of an identity, on the part of each beginning teacher, cannot be fully explained within the context of a well defined, discrete, school-based system alone. Wider fields of influence also have to be taken into consideration. Engeström's triangular conceptualisations do not draw attention to the wider social, economical, historical and cultural force fields in which these systems operate, other than in the form of other well-defined systems having an interaction with the system under study, as depicted in Engeström's (2001, p. 136) third-generation model of Activity Theory. Furthermore, when different activity systems interact, notions do not necessarily pass smoothly from one to another e.g. ideas learnt during initial teacher education transferring smoothly into the initial year of teaching (Haggarty and Postlethwaite 2009, p. 6). Therefore, rather than invoking images of learners engaging in 'boundary crossing' between different activity systems (Tuomi-Gröhn and Engeström 2003), a more fluid and intersecting concept is needed. When confronted both with a multiplicity of interacting and overlapping social systems, and with the embeddedness of social systems at different scales, Engeström's triangular diagrams, McMurtry (2006, p. 216) states, seem ill-suited to characterising such complexly interconnected

systems. A focus on local systems, and an accompanying inability to accommodate the macro-social perspectives and processes that act on, shape and inform local dilemmas are interpreted as critical limitations of Activity Theory (Martin and Peim 2009, p. 133). As a consequence, social antagonisms (e.g. contradictions) that derive from macro-social processes cannot be fully understood or resolved if represented only in terms of Engeström's triangular conceptualisations.

2.5 'Figured Worlds' and identity shaping

The concept of identity fundamentally relates to how individuals come to *figure* who they perceive themselves to be, through the *worlds* within which they participate, and how they relate to others within and outside of those worlds. Therefore, in addition to drawing on principles derived from sociocultural theories and activity theory, my study also frames identity shaping in terms of beginners' interactions with various *figured worlds* i.e. the historically and socially-constructed roles, meaning systems, and symbols of the cultural contexts they encounter. As all these theories are rooted in the cultural-historical tradition, while distinct in many ways, they possess, nonetheless, broadly similar perspectives on the shaping of identity.

Possessing voices and positions that vary in power and status, figured worlds are populated by imagined social types who transact circumscribed, conventionalised activities, pertinent to specific times and places (Holland et al. 1998, p. 41). Following Holland et al. (1998), I conceptualise individual beginning teachers as operating within their various figured worlds by receiving and asserting different identities.

Identities received or ascribed constitute both *figurative* and *positional* identities.

Figured identities are all about rules; how individuals engage with each other in the context of the activities that inform that world. These rules are presumed, so they

originate in the imagination. *Positional* or *relational identities* develop in the context of social experiences that are marked by the relations of power that characterise the everyday workings of culturally situated persons. Alternatively, asserted identities are agentically, dialectically and dialogically forged in *spaces of authoring,* wherein beginners 'invent' themselves (Corbin et al. 2010, p. 95), through participation with others populating these worlds. Thus, the voices of those others' become part of one's consciousness, subjectivity and inner speech, material which the self can orchestrate and externalise in various ways to position oneself within a figured world (Skinner at al. 2001). Through the enactment of such identities, figured worlds supply the contexts of meanings in which individuals come to understand themselves and develop the capacity to direct their own behaviour. With respect to the focus of my study, as it is intimately tied to identity work, the construct of 'figured worlds' is an important heuristic or template for understanding the shaping of identity and, therefore, well suited to describing the voices and positions inhering in the historically contingent, socially enacted, culturally constructed 'figured worlds' of primary schooling and the wider education system (Urrieta 2007; Naraian 2010).

2.6 Dialogical Self Theory and identity shaping

Though the combined tenets of sociocultural theories, activity theory and figured worlds theory, furnish ample theoretical critical mass, my study also benefits from being conversant with the basic principles of Dialogical Self Theory (Hermans 1996, 2012; Akkerman and Meijer 2011). Reflecting postmodern perspectives on identity, recent conceptualisations of teacher identity stress its multiple, discontinuous and social nature. However, it is untenable, Akkerman and Meijer (2011) suggest, that these postmodern characterisations would replace their earlier, modern equivalents, that is, the unity, continuity and individual nature of identity. Therefore, acting as a

necessary corrective, Dialogical Self Theory (Hermans 1996, 2012) provides a theoretical viewpoint that assumes the multiple, discontinuous and social nature of identity, while simultaneously explaining identity as being unitary, continuous and individual. Thus, acting as a "bridging theory" (Hermans 2012, p. 9), dialogical views combine a postmodern and a modern stance that more fully captures the concept of identity in the context of teaching. By weaving together the concepts of self and dialogue, the theory combines concepts that have traditionally been associated with, respectively, the internal space of the individual mind, and external relations with others. Its unifying effect renders a dialogical conceptualisation of identity "more complete" as an analytical approach in studying the development of beginning teachers (Akkerman and Meijer 2011, p. 309).

Throughout the course of my study, remaining sensitive to the principles of Dialogical Self Theory, obliges me to acknowledge the multiple, situated and social nature of identity, thus calling for care with using static and individualistic categorisations of beginning teachers. However, I am simultaneously obliged to study the dynamics of identity, detailing the self-dialogue that is pursued by the beginning teacher research participants, in their striving to maintain a coherent and consistent sense of self. Thus, in my study, the adoption of a dialogical approach means studying the shaping of identity in its full complexity.

Having outlined the theoretical principles guiding my study, as the shaping of beginning identity is conceived of in dimensional terms, the following subsections detail a framework composed of three dimensions of identity shaping, namely, contextual, emotional and temporo-spatial.

2.7 Contexts of beginning teacher identity shaping

> Local, divisional and head inspectors checked our work. The local inspector dropped in, "incidentally", as it was called, to see how the work was progressing. The visit of a head inspector was an awesome experience. The hotel porter tipped off the teachers in such cases. A young teacher was on probation for a few years till he was awarded his diploma. By and large, depending on the inspector, the system gave us a certain amount of freedom to tackle an exhausting curriculum. If the principal, manager and inspector were fair, everything was bearable (MacMahon 1992, p. 15).

Readily apparent from MacMahon's memoir is that the shaping of identity is situational as teachers create and recreate their identities in relation to surrounding contexts (Rodgers and Scott 2008; Cardelle-Elawar et al. 2007 cited in Hamman et al. 2010; Thomas and Beauchamp 2011). In this fashion, the shaping of MacMahon's beginning identity, in 1930's Ireland, occurred across a range of contexts, populated by 'actors' who possessed voices and positions that varied in power and status; local, divisional and head inspectors…….principal, manager and teachers……young teacher ……..hotel porter. The complexities and dynamics characterising the contexts within which MacMahon began to teach are readily apparent. Far from being the monolithic entity of lore, *the system, by and large, depending on the inspector, gave us a certain amount of freedom,* with fairness on the parts of all significant actors making everything *bearable.* However, if that *fairness* had not been forthcoming, the agentic capacity of MacMahon and his colleagues for subversive action would surely have been invoked. After all, they had displayed some form in this respect; rather than being the passive recipients of a visit from the head inspector, their securing 'insider information' from the local hotel porter, had helped blunt the 'awesomeness' of the occasion!

Contextuality insists that identity is significantly shaped by social, organisational, cultural and other features of contexts in which the shaping occurs. As it is necessary to account for how and why situation influences identity, theoretical frameworks examining teacher identity shaping should be inclusive of contextual considerations. It is imperative that the impact of wider social and institutional structures, the significance of power differentials and the micro-politics of the workplace are all incorporated into comprehensive accounts of identity shaping (Hodkinson et al. 2008, p. 32). However, in a review of literature, Beijaard et al. (2004) highlight the underemphasised consideration of situational and contextual factors within the broader framework of teachers' professional identity studies. Consistent with the underemphasised consideration of situational and contextual factors, Conway et al. (2012) uncover misleading assumptions regarding 'good' teachers and teaching as innate, individualistic and immutable, "thereby rendering invisible the powerful, developmental, cultural and institutional dynamics leading to 'good teachers and teaching" (p. 330).

Arising from a focus on the specifics of nine school-based settings, my study could convey a sense of learning settings having high resonance with site-specific, 'bounded' notions of learning. However, the boundaries of the learning cultures, characterising these nine school-based sites, are not so easily drawn. Many of the factors influencing the shaping of beginners' identities, in their respective workplace settings, operate and largely originate from outside the sites themselves. While learning sites can have relatively clear boundaries, the factors that constitute the learning culture in a particular site do not. A way of grappling with the difficulties this poses, together with related issues pertaining to scale i.e. investigating beginning

teaching at classroom, school, regional, national and international levels, is through Bourdieu's concept of field (1985 cited in Hodkinson et al. 2008, p. 35). In this way, any learning culture functions and is constructed and reconstructed through the forces of one or more fields. Viewing fields as primarily concerned with relational forces, as having imprecise and overlapping boundaries, and as existing at all scales, overcomes several of the weaknesses characteristic of site-specific, 'bounded' views of learning.

Thus, the nine school-based workplaces, featuring in my study, are viewed as part of a wider learning culture, influenced by what can usefully be seen as several overlapping fields. Those wider fields operate beyond each site and also within it. Additionally, field dynamics impact differently from site to site, and some factors that are highly important in one site are relatively unimportant in another. Not only are the internal dynamics of sites different, so are their positions relative to wider fields. Consequently, to understand the learning culture of any one beginning teaching site, it is necessary to understand the field of Irish primary schooling as a whole, and the relationship of each site to that field, and to other, wider, fields of which it is a part or with which it interacts. This interpenetration across scales is a principal reason why it is inaccurate to conceive of a learning culture or field as having precise boundaries. It is essential to acknowledge and seek to understand these complexities inherent to beginning teacher identity shaping.

2.7.1 Intersecting communities of practice and the shaping of identity

As we simultaneously participate in multiple communities of practice (Wenger 1998), accounting for the full complexity of contextual influence on beginning teacher identity shaping, necessitates establishing the significance of both the immediate and

the general or societal milieu by undertaking both a micro-analysis and a macro-analysis (Illeris 2007, p. 97; Akkerman and Meijer 2011, p. 316). A micro-analysis entails, for instance, describing how, in various school-based situations - classroom interactions, meetings, mentoring arrangements - beginning teachers shift identity positions in response to relevant others; pupils, colleagues, principals, inspectors parents. A macro-analysis, by contrast, goes beyond the here-and-now. Instead, it takes into consideration societal influences on beginning teachers, the power of ideology and cultural myths in our schools (Britzman 1986, 2003), as well as the socio-cultural character of the general teaching environment.

Whether or not beginning teachers are actively trying to sustain connections among the practices involved at the macro and micro levels of activity, multimembership always has the potential of creating various forms of continuity among them (Wenger 1998). However, instead of invoking images of crossing 'borders' or 'boundaries' in a multiple communities of practice scenario, Cairns (2011, p. 81) opines that a more fluid and intersecting concept needs to be employed. Therefore, in my study, the macro and micro layers are not conceived of in dualistic terms, but as intersecting, overlapping and enmeshed; as operating on different 'time scales' in a social world that is complex and multi-faceted (Czerniawski 2011, p. 435). These contextual realities complexify the shaping of beginning teachers' identities. It is important, Akkerman and Meijer (2011) state, to connect macro and micro analyses, showing how the macro-context "impinges on the teachers' patterned as well as momentary acts" (p. 316) and also how the micro-context may have consequences for the macro-context.

With respect to macro elements affecting the micro-context, it is relevant to account for how a beginning teacher's own early educational experiences or "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie 1975) inform beginning practices. As such, the knowledge, skills, dispositions and inherited 'good teaching' cultural scripts (Conway et al. 2012) that beginning teachers bring to teaching are, to a large extent, the products of the educational contexts in which these were developed. It is through prior experiences of this kind that the dispositions that constitute the Bourdieuian concept of *habitus* are developed. These largely tacit dispositions orientate people in relation to anything they do in life. Consequently, a person's dispositions can enable or facilitate some forms of learning in the workplace, whilst inhibiting or preventing others. Sometimes existing dispositions are reinforced. At other times, new dispositions are formed, or existing dispositions changed.

In relation to beginning teaching, important aspects of a first-year teacher's habitus would include how they were disposed to view the task of teaching, what personal, tacit theories they brought to that task, their expectations of what beginning teaching would involve, how they were disposed to engage with the range of learning situations encountered, and teaching approaches embraced as distinct from dispensed with. As such, particular epistemological perspectives are temporarily dominant and, thus, always in a dialogical relationship (Akkerman and Meijer 2011). This dialogue is not necessarily harmonious; hence the negotiated nature of identity shaping. Any aspect of identity may become dominant at a particular time, influencing the beginning teacher's sense of well-being and effectiveness. Consequently, a useful way of understanding the shaping of beginning teachers' identities is as a process through

which the dispositions that, respectively, constitute their habitus are confirmed, developed, challenged or changed.

Furthermore, the "apprenticeship of observation" is not confined to school settings alone. Conceptions of core concepts such as 'knowledge', 'teaching', 'learning', 'content', 'knowing' and so on that pervade actions, organisational structures, social relations, curriculum policies and instructional tools in schools, reflect those that pervade experiences outside school and the broader culture (Cohen 1988 cited in McDiarmid and Clevenger-Bright 2008, p. 144). Unless interrogated, the aggregate of these wider cultural experiences are difficult to "shift" in an initial teacher education programme. This suggests that the macro-contextual dimension of beginning teacher identity shaping is defining, however imperfectly. Consistent with this view, guiding my study is a perception of the beginning teacher as not solitary, instead being part of a wider system that includes the broad educational policy context, a nation's vision of education, a school's mission towards realising it, a curriculum through which to implement it, administrative entities invested in enforcing it, pupils who have been socialised to participate in it, and other relationships, both school-based and in wider communities-of-practice (Smagorinsky et al. 2004, p. 9). In an Irish context, participation in wider communities of practice include availing of direction from various online fora, fellow beginning teachers in other schools, participation in the activities of the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT), receipt of out-of-school mentoring help from an experienced teacher, or availing of teacher union sponsored, beginning teacher help initiatives.

With respect to the micro-context possibly affecting the macro-context, the chasm between policy specifications at the centre, and how policy directives are enacted and experienced locally (Stone 1997 cited in Conway and Murphy 2013, p. 15), means that any potential impact of national policies on, for example, the induction of beginning teachers, is not easy to specify or predict. Hence, a discourse analysis perspective (Miller Marsh 2002b) takes account of the fact that particular schools, aside from possessing an underdeveloped sense-of-self as a learning community, may also be resistant to perceived forms of external prescription and accountability. As a result, these schools may not subscribe, for example, to the espoused principles of the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT). In this regard, a chasm between policy and practice is evident in the unwillingness, on the parts of individual beginning teachers participating in my study, to attend the then voluntary - though now obligatory - series of workshops for newly qualified teachers, organised by the NIPT, in collaboration with the Association of Teacher Education Centres Ireland (ATECI).

2.7.2 Benefits of micro-macro analysis

In the present study, the motivation for engaging in an in-depth micro-macro analysis is that it facilitates a study of the dynamics of beginning teacher identity shaping as a matter of the teacher being an active participant with a specific identity at a particular moment in a specific context, as well as the teacher being historically meaningful, recognisable as an early-career professional, not alone within the teaching profession, but also cross-professionally. In-depth micro-macro analysis also causes boundaries between personal and professional contexts to become indistinct. Accordingly, teacher identity should not be defined completely in terms of professional

considerations. Doing so artificially predefines the boundaries of "where a teacher begins and where a teacher ends" (Akkerman and Meijer 2011, p. 317). All that a beginning teacher considers professionally relevant is also part of the whole personal self. A beginning teacher is not merely an early-career professional regardless of all that he or she is otherwise; personal histories, current behaviour patterns, future concerns may all inform the shaping of identity. Important to this way of thinking is an understanding of the multiplicity of each of our lives; lives composed around multiple plotlines and different life spheres (Clandinin et al. 2009).

At a macro level, tensions can arise between the person a teacher wants to be at work and in everyday life. Equally, at the micro level of the individual workplace, beginners can, simultaneously, be expected to be both 'student' and teacher, thus giving rise to tensions. While tensions arising from the adoption of these 'multiple-I positions' (Akkerman and Meijer 2011, p. 311; Hermans 2012) can be disruptive, theorists have argued that tensions can also prove fertile for creativity and learning, leading to meta-cognitive awareness (Alsup 2006), transformative learning (Mezirow 2009) and expansive transformations of activity systems (Engeström 2001). Achieving an understanding of this complexity demands careful examination of the doubts, dilemmas, and uncertainties that beginning teachers experience within their normal work routines and in wider, out-of-school settings.

2.7.3 Cultural influences and beginning teaching identity shaping

Frequently, for beginning teachers, identity is a construction of society or the world around them, an "ought" self, that represents what is expected of them, the role they must fulfil according to common societal views of teaching (Lauriala and Kukkonen

2005 cited in Thomas and Beauchamp 2011). A teacher's experience can, therefore, be one not only of active construction of an identity, but also one of an imposed or "designated identity" (Sfard and Prusak 2005, p. 14) stemming from societal or cultural conceptions of teachers, suggesting the need for agency on the part of beginning teachers. Indeed, the idea of a 'fictive identity' also captures the notion of a teacher composed not only of early life experiences but also of the cultural myths about who a teacher is as accepted by society (Jenlink 2006 cited in Beauchamp and Thomas 2010; Britzman 1986, 2003).

The construction of 'the teacher' has variously shifted throughout the years in popular culture. These constructions impact on teachers' self-perceptions, and on their motivations for entering teaching. In addition, teacher's own individual identities, those they bring with them, and those that are built and discursively maintained in the classroom, also interact with and impact on such productions (Francis and Skelton 2008). Waller (1932 cited in Shapiro 2010, p. 618) depicts a "model teacher", an almost mythical creature; set apart, distinct within society, and devoted solely to the cause of pedagogy. While Waller saw social distance between teachers and others as inevitable, even necessary for the maintenance of institutional authority, more recently Hargreaves (2001) has criticised the masculine ideal of "classical professionalism" that ignores the need for "close emotional understanding between teachers, parents, and students" (p. 1069). In a cross-national study, Cardelle-Elawar et al. (2007 cited in Hamman et al. 2010) highlight the role context plays in the shaping of teacher identity through investigation of teachers from three different countries; Ghana, Spain, and USA. The authors' examination of differences in motivation to teach from personal, historical, political, and economic perspectives,

illustrates potential cultural influences on teacher identity development. Similarly, Ibarra (2003 cited in Czerniawski 2011, p. 444) stresses that the "look and feel" of teaching is specific to particular national contexts.

In an exploration of the relationship between national culture and teacher identity, in the context of Scotland and England, Menter (2008) argues that because of the complex interplay between identity and historical, cultural, economic and social influences, it is desirable to draw from different forms of enquiry, as any single approach is unlikely to provide a broad understanding of the issue. While acknowledging the significant part social science accounts have to play in contributing to our understanding, Menter (2008) opines that these accounts, by themselves, are unlikely to convey a complete account of the significance of teachers' identity and its links with wider questions of national identity in cultural terms. Consequently, Menter (2008) suggests that creative cultural forms of representation of teachers – i.e. novels, plays, poetry, film, drama - complement social scientific studies, and provide a richer and more holistic understanding of teacher identities. Examining a range of creative accounts of teachers and teaching can lead to misgivings that the 'fictional' nature of creative accounts may lead to distorted views of teachers. However, these misgivings are offset by the likelihood that certain 'truths' are more accurately conveyed via creative forms than is possible through social science. In complementing the endeavours of social science, creative and personal accounts convey a strong sense of time and place, and of the material and the cultural specifics of teachers' experience and lives, thus successfully depicting teachers as individuals as well as members of an occupational group.

2.7.4 Being 'storied' into teaching: Cultural archetypes and beginning teaching

In Ireland, educational traditions are a key component of national culture. Indeed, a degree of romantic mythologising of these traditions occasionally occurs, which have a tendency to mask continuing challenges or shortcomings in Irish education (e.g. Cottrell 2012). Given the fragmented and small scale nature of research endeavour in Ireland (Sugrue 2009), it is not possible to draw major conclusions about national culture and teacher identity from social scientific studies. Therefore, in seeking to meaningfully understand teachers' identities in a contemporary Irish context, Sugrue (1996, 1997, 2004) draws on a wider range of perspectives than is usual. Avoiding a narrowly social scientific approach and drawing, instead, from cultural texts, Sugrue creates a genuinely context- and temporally sensitive account that seeks to define national aspects of culture that may be significant in the ways that teachers are formed and developed (to express it passively) or in the ways in which teachers create and develop their identity (to express it more actively).

Lay theories are the socially transmitted theories people use in their everyday lives. Reflecting the core beliefs of people living in a given culture, environment or figured world, lay theories, unlike scientific theories, need not be objective, testable, or true. Instead, largely a function of tacit knowledge and untutored interpretations, lay theories serve people's needs to label their observations as reflecting a correct social reality. As a consequence, lay theories have a far-reaching impact on judgments and behaviours toward the self, individual others, and groups. With regard to the potential impact on self, lay theories play a not insignificant role in informing decision-making on choice of career path. Sugrue (1996, 1997, 2004) seeks to determine the main factors that contribute to the creation of lay theories among those who choose primary

teaching as a career. The deconstruction of student teachers' lay theories on teaching, offers insights into the most formative personal and social influences shaping beginning identities. My study takes for granted that, post-graduation, these lay theories continue to inform beginning teacher perception. As such, these insights are critical, not alone to the process and substance of initial teacher education, but also to subsequent professional growth. The focus of my study pertains to the beginning phase of that subsequent professional growth.

In an Irish context, the most formative personal and social components shaping the figurative identities of primary teachers centre on three spheres of influence (Sugrue 2004).

These are:

- the embedded cultural archetypes of primary teaching;
- an 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie 1975) served within the socio-historical context of one's own schooling;
- wider socio-cultural experiences rooted in community and family life.

All three spheres of influence shape beginning teacher identity in distinct but overlapping and mutually reinforcing ways.

Firstly, in identifying archetypes dominant in popular perceptions of primary school teachers in Irish culture, Sugrue (1996, 1997, 2004) cites Irish literary sources, i.e. McCourt 1996, MacMahon 1992, Trevor 1993 and Banville 1986, to sketch the contours of the "Master" and the "Mistress", whose archetypal teaching has traditionally been encapsulated in an authoritarian approach to discipline, rote

learning and the memorisation of factual knowledge. Sugrue (1996, p. 158) is not suggesting that these archetypes are the reality in schools in contemporary Ireland. Rather, as in my study, their dominant characteristics provide important cultural benchmarks against which the continuity, complexity and variation of beginning teachers' lay theories can be analysed.

Secondly, biographical experiences influence the professional self-image of beginning teachers, as well as their often implicit and subjective perceptions about what constitutes 'a good teacher' and 'good education' (Conway et al. 2012). Relevant biographical aspects are early childhood experiences, positive and negative early teacher role models, and critical periods or moments in their life path. These biographical experiences have an impact on the self-conception of teachers but also on their conception of education, and they form a personal interpretation framework or 'cultural script' for their professional conduct as teachers (Stigler and Hiebert 1999; Vloet 2009, p. 71). In this fashion, an 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie 1975), which beginning teachers serve during the course of their own schooling, results in their exposure to a range of archetypal, dominantly didactic, 'teaching as telling', teaching styles. As the cumulative experience of school life can act as a filter, screening out content from academic programmes that challenges the 'observational apprenticeship', subsequent conceptions of pedagogy are, frequently, similarly didactic; teaching, influenced by the national pedagogic tradition in Ireland, equates to the transmission of knowledge (OECD 1991).

Finally, interaction in wider cultural contexts with immediate family, and significant and generalised others, who, drawing on culturally embedded images of teachers and

teaching, influence the nascent professional identities of beginning primary teachers. These sources of influence combine in various ways to provide internalised pictures of the world of teaching, which beginning teachers, in various ways, differentiate themselves from and identify with (Czerniawski 2009, 2011). In Ireland, these influences include, among others, beginners' own parents, pupils' parents, personal friends, teaching colleagues, school principals, inspectors, teacher educators, teaching union officials, and personnel attached to the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT).

My study seeks the perspectives of the participants on the potential impact each of these three spheres of influence had on the shaping of their figurative identities as beginning teachers i.e. the cultural archetypes of primary teaching, the 'apprenticeship of observation' derived from one's own schooling, and the wider socio-cultural experiences of everyday life. In doing so, I remain mindful that developing an identity as a beginning teacher is a function of the combined force of all three components, acting synergistically within the minds of individual beginning teachers. As with Sugrue (2004), this research undertaking also focuses on the themes of continuity and change in relation to the construction of lay theories among beginning teachers, as well as their resonance and dissonance with teaching archetypes.

2.7.5 Professional culture: Presumption, micropolitics and the shaping of identity

As the workplace is a key site where contingent identities are constructed and reconstructed (du Gay 1996 cited in Maguire 2008), studies note the impact of the immediate context on the shaping of beginning teacher identity. Being venues of opportunity as well as challenge, the way schools are matters enormously to beginning teachers, with interactions occurring within predominantly collaborative or

individualistic professional cultures (Kardos et al. 2001; Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Johnson and Kardos 2004; Kardos and Johnson 2007; Day and Gu 2010, pp. 82-83). Therefore, attention to the dynamics of beginning teachers' interactions with colleagues is essential to understanding the influence of the socially reproduced sites we know as 'schools' in shaping beginners' identities.

Within a school, a number of interrelated components determine the intangible working environment or professional culture surrounding a beginning teacher and influence the quality of learning opportunities offered. Particularly important in the shaping of beginner identity is the relationship between the beginner and the school principal (Youngs 2007; Birkeland and Feiman-Nemser 2012). Also key are the nature of the interactions between the beginner and his or her colleagues, especially the quality of both formal and informal mentoring supports offered (Flores and Day 2006; McDiarmid and Clevenger-Bright 2008; Feiman-Nemser 2010; Haggarty et al. 2011; Mooney Simmie and Moles 2011; Devos et al. 2012). Thus, the nature of school culture and the characteristics of school organisation are key mediating factors in framing the socialising influence of colleagues. As a result, the different components of teacher induction do not independently influence beginners' learning, but are mediated by the social, cultural and organizational contexts of schools (Wang et al. 2008). Accordingly, particular school cultures are more appropriate and conducive to learning than others.

Of three professional cultures outlined by Kardos and Johnson (2007) i.e. veteran-oriented, novice-oriented, and integrated professional cultures, beginning teachers benefit most from integrated professional cultures. Therefore, support programmes

need to be embedded and nurtured within supportive, collaborative and learning-oriented school cultures where the interplay between formal and informal dimensions of induction are evident (Flores 2010, p. 49). Beginning teacher mentoring is more likely to be successful where it takes place within schools which are characterised by collegial learning cultures; where both mentors and mentees have access to support outside of the mentoring relationship, such as from other teachers in the school, and where mechanisms exist that enable mentees and mentors to initiate the establishment of an alternative pairing, without blame being attached to either party, where they feel that the relationship is not, or is no longer, productive (Hobson et al. 2009, p. 211). In schools that embrace an "integrated professional culture" involving a "two-way interaction about teaching and learning among novices and experienced teachers" (Kardos and Johnson 2007, p. 4), the desired policy outcomes of induction are more likely to be achieved. Crucially, however, learning affordances are only part of the dynamic affecting the shaping of beginning identity. Two factors complicate the issue.

Firstly, identity shaping cannot be conceived of without considering the reciprocal social interplay between the individual and larger environments or communities. For a beginning teacher, being recognised by self and others as a certain kind of person in a school community is, in part, determined by the socio-historical culture or structure of teaching and, in part, is open to individual choices by the beginning teacher. Therefore, learner participation in workplace practices is dually constituted between workplace affordances and on how an individual chooses to engage with these affordances (Dotger and Smith 2009; Cohen 2010; Billett 2011). While Anthony et al. (2011, p. 868) establish that beginners need to proactively contribute to induction

processes in an active and purposeful manner in order to maximize opportunities for professional learning, Eraut (2004) maintains that each individual will interpret what is offered within a personal context and history that has been shaped by personal experience. Thus, the themes of affordance and agency are intertwined to the extent that an individual's learning in a particular workplace context is unique (Stronach 2010; Haggarty et al. 2011).

Secondly, school organisation is not a rational, ordered, or unitary system, but a place where individual differences, goal diversity, conflict, different values, and informal power exist among teachers and those in leadership positions (Hong 2010). As a result, beginning teachers enter school contexts that may prefer that their teachers enact a role that has been defined by the system, rather than that they self-author their role and, hence, their identity, in a self-motivated, self-directed, agentic manner. Beginning teachers need to be prepared to negotiate that system in a way that is productive for them and their students (Rodgers and Scott 2008, p. 751). While tension may arise between the agency of beginning teachers and the structure of the school setting (Beijaard et al. 2004), a different consequence of beginners acting as autonomous and unique persons is that new voices are introduced into the communities in which they participate. Beginning teachers are not merely novices that have to uncritically adopt the norms, values and common practices of the school. Increasingly, beginning teachers are also conceived of as brokers who open up possibilities for experienced teachers and schools to learn, for example, by asking critical questions or by introducing new pedagogical ideas and insights to the school.

The teaching profession is distinct (almost unique) in its treatment of its new members. Commonly, the beginning teacher must assume all the roles and responsibilities of the experienced practitioner. As such, the workplace experience of a majority of beginning teachers is one of being "on their own and presumed expert" (Kardos and Johnson 2007, p.2083). Prevalent and problematic, the situation whereby beginning teachers move swiftly from an unqualified status to a fully autonomous status is referred to as the "status-shift view of teacher development" (Dutro 2007, p. 224). Thus, the lot of many beginning teachers is both personally isolating and professionally deficient. Unsupported and largely left to "sink or swim", beginning teachers, Conway et al. (2009) state, frequently resort to "self-socialising" and "learning on the job", developing "safe practices" that enable them to survive in classrooms but run counter to reform directions in their "adherence to the prevailing norms of the culture, beliefs and dominant practices of the professional context" (p. 127). In the United States, indifference to the lot of the beginning teacher is viewed as being a major contributory factor towards high levels of attrition among new entrants to the profession and poor quality pedagogic practice among those who remain (Feiman-Nemser 2001, p. 1014). Similarly, in Portugal (Flores 2004; Flores 2006), beginning teachers, in the absence of collegial relationships and effective school leadership, were more likely to display "idiosyncratic coping strategies" and "isolated and individual processes of learning" (2004, p. 324).

In these ways, many beginning teachers find themselves immersed in complex social relations and sophisticated professional roles within established school communities, whilst at the same time scrambling to make sense of their own experiences and understand what it means to be a teacher (Day and Gu 2010, p. 66). Summarising the

lot of most beginners, Feiman-Nemser (2010, p. 25) states that new teachers have two jobs; they have to teach and they have to learn to teach. Moreover, the best pre-service preparation only lays foundational capabilities and it is only when a beginning teacher enters their own classroom that they begin to get a sense of the complexities associated with teaching. Consequently, beginning teaching may be marked by a realignment or accommodation of identity as new teachers begin the process of reconciling messages about teaching that may differ between initial teacher education settings and the actual schools and classrooms where they are now working (Smagorinsky et al. 2004). My study attempts to uncover if such a realignment or accommodation of identity characterised the early-career experiences of research participants.

School sites, therefore, are where key factors influencing the shaping of beginning identities converge. Moreover, regardless of the type of professional culture prevailing in a school, the shaping of identity happens in any case. Too often, though, the dominant narrative influencing the shaping of identity reflects a "sink-or-swim" approach, usually transacted within a veteran-oriented school culture. To rewrite this dominant narrative, the organisational practices and professional cultures in schools must change (Feiman-Nemser 2010, p. 22; Birkeland and Feiman-Nemser 2012). Existing within a set of nested contexts, general policies advocating, even mandating, support for beginning teachers, while helpful, are not sufficient (Carver and Feiman-Nemser 2009, p. 323; Kardos and Johnson 2010, p. 41). Given these complexities, my study seeks to ascertain participants' perceptions of the professional cultures prevailing in their early-career practice settings.

Having outlined the centrality of contextuality to identity shaping, the following subsections detail a further dimension of experience, important to shaping the identities of beginning teachers, namely, emotionality. Separable only for analysis purposes, the enmeshed nature of both contextuality and emotionality becomes apparent when one considers that widely-practiced, "sink-or-swim" induction practices possess the potential to engender a range of emotions among beginners.

2.8 Emotionality and the shaping of identity

> I had cause to remember my first incidental inspection. It had happened in the old temperance hall [temporary school accommodation]. The din of the place and the inattention due to all kinds of distractions caused me to lose my temper. One day I found myself shouting, "I would rather be piking dung than teaching you fellows!" (MacMahon 1992, p. 15)

As vividly illustrated by MacMahon's recall of early experiences, emotions constitute core components of teachers' lives (Nias 1996). Teachers' talk about their work reveals that emotions, both positive and negative, lie "at the heart of teaching" (Hargreaves 1998, p. 835). Frequently, the emotional dimension of teaching loosely centres on the notion of job satisfaction. Negative feelings such as exhaustion, frustration, tension, anxiety, inadequacy, guilt and vulnerability, are indicative of low levels of job satisfaction, whereas the often simultaneous presence of positive feelings such as self-efficacy, motivation, enthusiasm, excitement, pride, happiness, commitment and resilience, can be considered as indicative of professional fulfilment (Intrator 2006; Flores and Day 2006; Morgan and Kitching 2007; Day and Kington 2008; Kitching et al. 2009; Bullough 2009; Kelchtermans 2011; Morgan 2011; Farouk 2012). Inevitably, what determines levels of job satisfaction is the balance or ratio of

positive to negative emotions, experienced by teachers (Sutton and Wheatley 2003).

2.8.1 'Emotional geographies' and 'emotional labour'

Two concepts prove useful in fostering an understanding of the inherent emotionality of school-based workplaces. Firstly, the concept of "emotional geographies" (Hargreaves 2001), devised specifically in relation to school-based workplaces, posits that teachers' emotions are embedded and shaped in the conditions and interactions of their work, and are then manifest in their interactions with colleagues, pupils and others. Secondly, though the concept relates to workplaces generally, teaching is an occupation deemed to demand a considerable degree of "emotional labour" (Hochschild 1983 cited in Schutz and Zembylas 2009, p. 374). Emotional labour involves enhancing, faking, and/or suppressing emotions to modify one's emotional expressions. Zembylas (2003a) draws attention to the "emotional labour" demanded of teachers to conform to what is deemed appropriate within schools i.e. the "emotional rules" of school. Accordingly, teacher identity is shaped within specific school arrangements, in relation to certain expectations and requirements. For example, feelings of anger are unwelcome in a culture that views teachers as restrained, gentle, and nurturing. Thus, the emotions teachers experience, and in some cases are encouraged or forbidden to experience in particular contexts, may expand or limit possibilities in teaching (Zembylas 2003a, 2003b).

Much of the work on emotional labour has revolved around the degree to which those engaging in emotional labour experience negative impacts from the expenditure of that labour. However there have been challenges to this negative conceptualisation.

With important implications for the study of emotion to glean an understanding of teacher identity, the contested nature of the concept has given rise to attempts to develop additional and sharper analytical tools with which to explore this aspect of labour (Cullen et al. 2013). Firstly, recent research indicates that where workers strongly identify with those with whom they were interacting, there was less likelihood of emotional labour having negative impacts on them. Secondly, the effects of emotional labour are crucially mediated by the levels of dissonance experienced by those workers performing that labour. Other factors having a bearing on the negative or positive experience of engaging in emotional labour include the frequency, duration, intensity and variety of the work engaged in, suggesting that emotional labour can be experienced in a largely positive fashion. This recent perspective is not without its critics and Brook (2009 cited in Cullen et al. 2013) has recently attempted to "wrest the theoretical ground back to what he argues is Hochschild's original and negative conceptualisation" (p. 309).

2.8.2 Challenging terrain receives increased attention

Though an inevitable part of teachers' lives, traditionally the study of emotions has been a neglected area in educational research and commentary. In 1996, Nias would state that: "By implication and omission teachers' emotions are not a topic deemed worthy of serious academic or professional consideration" (p. 293). Even as recently as 2003, in a review of research on teacher emotions, Sutton and Wheatley noted that surprisingly little research had been undertaken into the emotional aspects of teachers' lives. Specifically, emotional labour in teaching and especially the emotional labour demanded in student-teacher and teacher-student relationships in the classroom are areas of research that have not received much attention (Zembylas and Schutz 2009,

p. 374). Even approaches inspired by sociocultural theories are deemed neglectful with respect to the affective domain. In this respect, while Vygotsky recognised that emotion cannot be filtered out of analyses of how we act in the world (Vygotsky 1986 cited in Edwards 2010), Moll (2001, p. 124) expresses surprise that, considering the affect-laden nature of teaching, the study of emotions has not generally been well addressed in Vygotskian inspired literature. Specifically, Wardekker (2010, p. 242) opines that Engeström's (1987, 1999, 2001) activity theoretical models do not afford insight into the emotional processes inherent to the learning and development of teachers. As to why the study of emotion in education is neglected by comparison with other domains, Reio (2005) suggests that although the importance of emotion to educational practice is recognised internationally, emotion tends to be overlooked in most educational research as it is notoriously amorphous and difficult to 'pin down'. As a result, the field struggles with vague definitions and multiple terminologies (Harvey et al. 2012), which may explain, to some extent, why there is still a dearth of authoritative works on teacher emotions (Deegan 2008; Day and Lee 2011).

Despite the challenging nature of the terrain, the role of emotions in teaching and teachers' lives is receiving increased attention. An increased emphasis on the role of emotions in workplaces generally (Eraut 2004; Beatty 2011), mirrors a growing body of literature that points to emotion as a significant and ongoing part of being a teacher. As such, teachers' emotions have recently been at the heart of several lines of research and commentary (e.g. Noddings 1992; Nias 1996; Britzman 2003; Zembylas 2003a, 2003b, 2005, 2007, 2011; Perryman 2007; van Veen and Lasky 2005; Kelchtermans 2005, 2011; Deegan 2008; Beauchamp and Thomas 2009; Schutz and Zembylas 2009; Hosotani and Imai-Matsumura 2011; O'Brien 2012; Cross and Hong

2012; Farouk 2012; Corcoran and Tormey 2010, 2012, 2013). These new perspectives promote a more nuanced view of teacher development and compel us to re-examine our educational practices from teacher education through to teacher retirement using a lens that includes the emotional dimension of teaching (Meyer 2009). Otherwise, to perceive teaching as a rational activity and neglect its emotional character, contributes towards an underestimation of its inherent complexity (Schutz and Zembylas 2009, p. 10).

2.8.3 Research traditions on emotions in teaching

Despite a growing body of research on emotions in teaching and teachers' professional lives, a systematic understanding and conceptualisation of teachers' emotions in relation to their work and identity has still to be developed. Little research has examined teacher emotion within the framework of an explicit theory of emotion (van Veen and Lasky 2005). Instead, several different theoretical approaches have been used in the study of teachers' emotions i.e. psychological, sociological, and sociocultural.

De-emphasising the role of context, cognitive psychological research focuses on the internal, intrapersonal nature of a teacher's emotional responses. By contrast, sociological perspectives focus on how teachers' emotions are socially constructed in the group dynamics of social situations and how those situations uni-directionally shape teachers' emotional experiences. However, sociologically orientated research approaches, Menter (2008) states, are not sufficient to capture the emotional investments and engagements of teachers with teaching. While both offer important insights, neither psychological nor sociological perspectives sufficiently address the

complex role of emotions in teaching. Both perspectives have, respectively, emphasised teachers' individual perceptions of work-related emotions or foregrounded, for instance, the emotional nature of classroom interactions with pupils. Therefore, with the shortcomings of, respectively, psychological and sociological approaches in mind, with respect to beginning teachers, Luft (2007) cautions against either 'personalising the data' or focusing too deeply on the 'heart-wrenching stories of the lives of first-year teachers' (p. 534).

Alternatively, sociocultural perspectives view teachers' emotions as 'situated' in particular institutional and personal educational histories. Emotion discourses position individuals as socially and culturally specific persons engaged in complex webs of power relations. By highlighting how teachers agentically participate in this process through the adoption or resistance of these discourses (Hall et al. 2012), sociocultural perspectives position emotions as constitutively reciprocal components in the space between perspectives that psychologise emotions as private and internalised, and sociological approaches that emphasise how structures shape the individual. Therefore, sociocultural perspectives allow researchers to move beyond a dualistic view of emotions as simply a matter of the individual or the group and offer a more all-encompassing, dialogical approach (Hermans 1996, 2012; Akkerman and Meijer 2011) towards conceptualising teachers' emotions. In this manner, the inherent emotionality of school-based workplaces and the shaping of teachers' identities are conceived of as mutually constitutive.

Adopting sociocultural perspectives, in my study I attempt to account for the reciprocally mediating influence of a range of factors on the progressive shaping of

beginning teachers' emotional identities. These include, among others, the micropolitical realities of workplace culture, school leadership styles, professional relationships with colleagues and parents, personal influences located in individual biographies, and vulnerabilities rooted in life outside the school setting**.** Rather than adopting a detached position, I empathise with the research participants, informed primarily by the emotional nature of my own beginning teacher experiences, thirty-six years ago.

2.8.4 Emotionality and beginning teaching

In relation to emotions, though there are commonalities with experienced colleagues, there are also distinctive features for those 'at the threshold' of the teaching profession. Research into significant changes in the life course suggests that emotions have a more important place in identity-forming learning processes than is generally acknowledged (Meijers and Wardekker 2002 cited in Geijsel and Meijers 2005). As beginning to teach represents a significant change in the life course, the period may particularly affect teacher identity because of the degree of emotion involved (Zembylas and Schutz 2009). In 1989, Huberman concluded that the teachers he studied had either "easy" or "painful" beginnings. Use of these terms underscores the emotional nature of the experience of learning to teach. In the decades since then, an appreciation has developed that understanding, negotiating and monitoring the intense emotionality of teaching is a primary dimension of beginning to teach.

For many beginning teachers, meeting the job's demands and accomplishing their work represents a considerable challenge. Strong emotions are aroused in the process of 'becoming' a teacher as beginners experience a range of work-related dilemmas.

Thus, Stronach (2010, p. 210) contends, the emotional making of a teacher, their 'thinking of feeling', is not a simple or even an entirely rational matter. In this regard, the emotional volatility in learning to teach is well illustrated by the adjectives used by beginning teachers to portray their experiences of teaching over the course of their beginning year in the classroom (Bullough and Young 2002, p. 421). Undoubtedly, therefore, emotions play an important role in learning to teach as beginning teachers reveal that the management of emotions is an important issue in their first year. For beginning teachers, learning to teach is deeply personal work, engaging teachers' emotions as well as their intellect and plays out against the backdrop of forming an identity as a teacher (Feiman-Nemser 2008).

However, emotional experiences that are an integral part of the process of becoming a teacher have been insufficiently explored in the research literature. While research undertakings have investigated teacher and school principal identities in relation to challenges to their moral purposes, and examined the associated emotions (e.g. Day et al. 2006, 2007; Hargreaves 1998), there is much less research on emotions associated with transition from initial teacher education into beginning teaching, despite Tickle's finding, in 1991, that emotions feature prominently in debriefing meetings with beginning teachers. Neglect of the emotional domain was such that by 2003 Sutton and Wheatley could observe that: "there is almost no research on the role of emotions in learning to teach" (p. 346). As a result, by comparison with other dimensions of beginning teaching, a dearth of authoritative works on teacher emotions means that we still know surprisingly little about the role of emotions in learning to teach (Day and Lee 2011; Jakhelln 2011).

In a similar fashion, teacher preparation programmes, as with professional development programmes for teachers generally, often reflect the dichotomous division between intellect and affect, focusing only on supporting the development of cognitive understandings and skills; the emotional side of teacher learning is overlooked. Thus, beginning teachers are left to figure out how to navigate and integrate the emotional aspects of practice on their own (Geijsel and Meijers 2005 cited in Luehmann 2007; Mayer 2011). When arriving in a new workplace, post-graduation, beginning teachers need to make sustained efforts to succeed as a teacher. Whereas positive emotions associated with teaching can be considered as a central indicator of professional fulfilment and a significant predictor of willingness to continue teaching, negative emotions, Schutz and Zembylas (2009, p. 3) suggest, offer one explanation for high attrition rates among beginning teachers in some countries. Beginning teachers are frequently caught in a cycle of self-blame where school culture makes it easy to conclude that difficulties experienced in practice are teachers' fault alone and structural conditions are less influential than the individual's own failings (Winograd 2003, p. 1669). Therefore, the responses that beginners receive from their workplace colleagues are likely to have great impact on their emotions. For beginning teachers, support in managing the emotional unpredictability of classroom teaching and learning is as important as support in developing their pedagogical and classroom management skills (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Day and Gu 2010, p. 66; Devos et al. 2012). As supportive, collegial relationships contribute in significant ways to the emotional well-being of beginning teachers, it is essential that a whole-school approach towards reducing the emotional vulnerability of beginning teachers is adopted.

2.8.5 Emotionality and the shaping of beginning identity

For beginning teachers, learning to teach plays out against the backdrop of forming an identity as a teacher. In a study of identity development among beginning teachers, Smagorinsky et al. (2004) conclude that identity is co-constructed "through engagement with others in cultural practice" (p. 21). Relationship, therefore, is essential to identity primarily because to have an identity one must be recognised as a particular "kind of person" by others. The stories we tell of ourselves and that others tell of us, which justify who we are or are thought to be, have an emotional loading because, as judgements, emotions and combinations of emotions underpin, energise, and sustain the narratives told (Bullough 2009, p. 43). Experienced as a mixture of induction-related supports and probationary-related evaluative judgements, beginning teaching is a period during which practices are consistently dissected and publicly discussed; an experience, in other words, where "others" commonly "look in". In an Irish context, that the complex of relationships between beginning teachers and principals, colleagues, mentors, pupils, parents, school Inspectorate, National Induction Programme personnel, and entities such as the DES, and the Teaching Council, would provoke emotion, is of no surprise. Thus, the emotion brought to the context and that generated by the context will influence the shaping of identity.

While many discussions of professional identity emphasise the cognitive aspects of teacher experiences, it could be argued that the more influential factor at work in shaping professional identity is emotion: "It is our experience of *affect* which forms the basis of our sense of professional self (Shapiro 2010, p. 617). Indeed, Stronach (2010, p. 208) notes how affectively dominated the forging of an early-teacher self is.

As teachers' emotional practice and teacher identity are viewed as intertwined, emotions are increasingly perceived as a critical aspect of the expression and shaping of identity. As such, identity becomes reshaped through discourses and practices of emotion. In essence, teacher identity develops as experienced emotions (Hargreaves 1998, 2001; Zembylas 2003a, 2003b, 2011; Geijsel and Meijers 2005). Indeed, the view is advanced that emotion "functions as the 'glue' for identity" (Haviland-Jones and Kahlbaugh 2004 cited in Bullough 2009, p. 42).

Traditionally, though the emotional domain has not been a significant focus of research on teacher identity (Day et al. 2006; Meyer 2009, p. 78), more recently, the role of emotion in shaping teacher identity appears to be an expanding area of research (e.g. Kelchtermans 2005; Beauchamp and Thomas 2009). Specifically, researchers focus on how new teachers construct identity as teachers through early emotional experiences in teaching. As a consequence, research on the role of emotion in learning to teach and the development of beginning teacher identity has gained a foothold (Bullough and Draper 2004; Flores and Day 2006; Rodgers and Scott 2008; Meyer 2009; Shoffner 2009, 2011; McNally and Blake 2010a; Zembylas 2011; Mayer 2011; Jakhelln 2011; Bahia et al. 2013; Aspfors and Bondas 2013).

2.8.6 Emotionality among beginners participating in the present study

An important point of transition for examining emotional practice and its relationship to the shaping of teacher identity is during the first year of workplace experience, post-graduation. Accordingly, in my study, data derived from three rounds of semi-structured interviews and digital logs are examined with a view to establishing how emotions are intertwined with the relationships that beginning teachers are building

with their students, colleagues, principals, mentors, and others in their school communities (McNally and Blake 2010a). Relationships, therefore, serve as a platform for my analyses of emotional tensions that arise and often persist as beginning teachers assume early instructional responsibilities under their own and others' scrutiny. In this way, I am interested in exploring what beginning teachers are feeling, resisting, and choosing (Zembylas 2005), and how their induction into the emotional practice of teaching might be influencing the shaping of their teaching identities. As I illustrate, using their words, these tensions are examples of emotional practice that are bound to relationships and situated within specific school and classroom cultures.

Overarchingly, my study seeks to present evidence concerning ways emotions seem significantly implicated in the processes of early professional identity shaping, as they relate to beginning primary teaching. In seeking to research the mutually constitutive dynamic between the inherent emotionality of first-year workplace experience, post-graduation, and the shaping of beginning teacher identity, a principal objective of my study is to contribute to an understanding of a crucial but, hitherto, under-researched area of beginning teaching.

Having outlined how contextuality and emotionality relate to the shaping of beginning identity, the concluding sections of this chapter detail how the temporo-spatial dimension of experience relates to the shaping of identity among those participating in my study.

2.9 Temporo-spatiality and the shaping of identity: "Who am I at this moment?"

> So there they were before me, merchants' sons with Little Duke shoes, poachers and sons of poachers, weavers of fiction, the cunning, the intelligent, and the dull……. …… all were there; the nervous and the fearless, the runaways, the nail biters, the accident-prone, the superficially perfect, ……the informers, the impenetrable, the esoteric, the horse lovers, the deaf. After a time all grew interesting if not precious to me (MacMahon 1992, p. 20).

In the manner that classroom life in all its multi-various forms grew interesting and precious for MacMahon *after a time,* contemporary understandings of identity emphasise its never-ending, open-ended, shifting and fluid nature (Reay 2010, p. 277). Endlessly accomplished and then undone, endlessly incomplete and always only 'part of the story' (Wetherell 2010, p. 16), any act of identification is a temporary and more or less arbitrary moment of closure. Thus, possessing both temporal and spatial implications, this dynamic perspective views the shaping of identity as always ongoing and unfinished, a process of constant renegotiation during the course of our lives. In turn, in the following two subsections, I outline the rationale for incorporating temporal and spatial considerations in accounts of identity shaping.

2.9.1 Temporality and the shaping of beginning identities

Though much neglected as a concept, time is a crucial element in considerations of education and schooling (Ben-Peretz 1986). With respect to the focus of my study, the inseparability of temporality and development (Valsiner 1998) means that consideration of a temporal dimension to identity shaping is important. In tracing trajectories of professional growth, the ongoing renegotiation of identity among beginning teachers places their participation in practices in a temporal context. The

developmental time period studied equates to the participating beginners' first year of workplace experience, post-graduation. Once a temporal dimension is acknowledged, metaphors such as engagement, transformation, (re)construction, emergence or becoming, are suitable to advance understandings of the shaping of identity in the workplace (Hager 2011, p. 27). Similarly, learning is more fruitfully viewed as an ongoing, participative process rather than as a series of discrete acquisition events (Hager and Hodkinson 2009). Never simply linear and conceived of in interlocked trajectorial terms, our identities incorporate the past and the future, in the very process of negotiating the present (Wenger 1998, p. 155). Therefore, we are always simultaneously dealing with specific situations, participating in the histories of certain practices, and involved, over time, in becoming certain persons.

Consistent with these perspectives, during the initial year of practice, beginning teachers are often aware that they are changing as persons (McNally 2010), instanced by a growing awareness of their workplace profile (Dodds 2010). As a result, the shaping of identity is frequently understood in terms of developing an increasing capacity for acting in flexible, constructive and innovative ways, appropriate to the challenges of ever-changing circumstances. In this regard, Stronach (2010) is struck by the enormously rapid growth in complexity and range of early professional learning, evidenced in how quickly many beginning teachers developed a capacity to engage in "extended, situated, provisional, contingent and propositional reasoning" (p. 214). Contrastingly, though, hinging on a beginner's exploration and meaning making of a new teaching practice, far from being a narrative of triumphs, the shaping of identity is also an uneven and unpredictable process, characterised by breakdowns and breakthroughs (Corbin et al. 2010). Experienced as uneven, elastic, unstable and

mercurial, new teachers report stages of the turbulent beginning year as passing unevenly, compressing, sometimes at breakneck speed, at other times lingering or elongating (Corbin et al. 2010; Dodds 2010). Both vivid and forgettable, the 'time' of becoming a teacher seems to be contradictory and strange. For instance, though the facilitation of reconstructed anticipation is beneficial as a reflective practice (Conway 2001), among beginners studied by Corbin et al. (2010, pp. 92-33), at the conclusion of their beginning year, past selves were uncertainly recalled. We can see the disordering of time and memory is symbolic of a deeper existential confrontation, as the ordered limits of induction are contested by the disordering excesses of initiation. In this regard, Corbin et al. (2010, p. 95) opine that it is unsurprising that in such a collision the limits of teacher 'training' are reached.

2.9.2 Spatiality, limanility and the shaping of beginning identities

Increasingly prominent in the social sciences generally, particularly in geographically oriented studies (e.g. Holloway and Valentine 2000; Taylor 2013), the concept of spatiality invites a perception of the beginning year of workplace practice as one of traversing a liminal or boundary space. Informed, in turn, by a situative perspective on identity shaping, the notion of boundary or liminal space is understood to represent a significant transition point with the potential for substantial learning (McNamara et al. 2002; Cook-Sather 2006). Noteworthy, though, is that interest in the effect of transition phases on the shaping of identity has mainly focused on student teachers (Ruohotie-Lyhty 2013, p. 121). Yet, occupying an important boundary or liminal space, the first year of teaching entails movement from the environment of teacher education to initial practice, where more independence is expected as teachers adjust to the culture of a new professional setting. Thus, the beginner is positioned between

one way of being and another, new way. As a result, significant changes in identity occur when beginning teachers graduate and begin their work in schools and classrooms (Flores and Day 2006; Luehmann 2007; Wilkins et al. 2012). Occurring at the intersection of their initial teacher education, their own experiences as students, memories of teachers whom they hope to model, and their tacit images of the classroom teacher in the primary school system (Sugrue 1997, 2004), the dissonance between these concepts places beginning teachers in a position where they must organise and make meaning of their past, present, and future experiences in order to shape an individual and coherent identity.

Thus, conceived as a 'space of authoring' (Holland et al. 1998) for emergent professional selves, the initial year of teaching represents a liminal space wherein beginning teachers *invent* themselves through processes of 'trial and error' (Corbin et al. 2010, p. 95). Uneven and unpredictable, far from being a narrative of triumphs, the liminal space represented by the initial year of teaching is a transformative time for beginners, a period of continuous adjustments to new situations and the accompanying constraints and opportunities imposed on one's identity in its ongoing transformation. In this manner, the beginning year frequently constitutes a kind of liminal vortex of affectively dominated challenging events, and provisional gains and losses (Corbin et al. 2010; Stronach 2010). However, in related studies of beginner identity at the point of graduation from two different four-year teacher education programmes in Canada, only a very tentative sense of teacher identity could be articulated by research participants, suggesting that identity development needs more overt attention at the initial teacher education stage (Beauchamp and Thomas 2006, 2011; Thomas and Beauchamp 2007). While the new teachers in the two Canadian

studies expressed their possession of agency in some contexts, they realised that more or broader agency was needed in many contexts. They understood to a fuller extent the scope of the teacher's role and the need to take on an identity and agency that could address a variety of situations. As a result, teacher educators must remain mindful of the continuous adjustments to new situations and the accompanying constraints and opportunities imposed on beginner identity in its ongoing transformation.

Yet, frequently privileging 'the what' over 'the who', initial teacher education programmes often focus on what beginning teachers need to know to ensure successful classroom practice. These efforts usually centre on knowledge *for* practice (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1999) i.e. the provision of highly specific information on, for instance, lesson planning, the organisation of classroom activities and the management of learner behaviour. Of itself, this is insufficient as beginning teaching forces new teachers to confront themselves and their identities on a regular basis and in multiple ways. For instance, Thomas and Beauchamp (2011) establish that choice of metaphor suggests that beginning teachers struggle to develop a professional identity during their first year, and that the process is gradual, complex, frequently problematic, and fraught with periods of self-doubt and questioning. This insight should deliberately inform the content of initial teacher education programmes, thus allowing beginning teachers to have a clearer idea of what to expect in terms of the process of identity shaping in the first year of their careers. As a result, an envisioning of self-as-professional, not least in respect of coping with the uncertainty of teaching (Floden and Clark 1988), during teacher preparation, is, potentially, very helpful towards preparing new teachers for the challenges of their first year. As for

strengthening the links between initial teacher education and beginning practice, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009, p. 186) suggest that researchers explore the relationship between success and failure in beginning practice and the preparation provided previously in a teacher education programme, paying particular attention to the ways in which the demands of beginning practice draw on competencies developed in previous preparation. Such research undertakings might very well help to reveal the needed links across preparation programmes and beginning practice in terms of identity development.

2.9.3 Beginning teaching: A diverse and singular experience

A focus on the "praxis shock" experienced by beginners is prominent in the research tradition on learning to teach (e.g. Veenman 1984, Gold 1996, Wideen et al. 1998 cited in Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Le Maistre and Paré 2010). However, overlapping themes, increasingly present in the literature, relate to the diverse and singular nature of beginning teaching (e.g. Oosterheert and Vermunt 2001; Mutton et al. 2008; Ulvik et al. 2009; Stronach 2010; Haggarty et al. 2011; Cochran-Smith 2012b; Ruohotie-Lyhty 2013: Christensen 2013). As a consequence, though patterned through being partly shared, not only is beginning teaching viewed as a diverse or singular experience for each beginner arising from the particular school in which they teach, but also, as a function of habitus or history-in-person (Holland and Lave 2009), each beginner brings to a particular context various deep rooted preconceptions about the nature of effective teaching and learning, and their own set of dispositions and expectations about how to develop professional knowledge. As a result, inter-personal processes in schools are frequently multi-directional rather than simply from centre to periphery, from senior colleagues to beginning teachers.

In desiring to be perceived as proper teachers, beginners, to varying degrees, respond by agentically engaging in forms of proactive, self-directed development (e.g. Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Bulfin and Mathews 2003). In this respect, Roberts and Graham (2008) identify three proactive strategies engaged in by beginning teachers: tactical compliance; personalising advice; and seeking out opportunities to exercise control. It is argued (Hall et al. 2012) that engagement or participation in strategies of this kind is indicative of beginners' drive towards becoming as a teacher and the authoring of a self, through self-directed development and the creation of individual development agendas. Evans et al. (2006, p. 97) suggest that even when there is no intention that newcomers should change the culture and practices of a workplace, it frequently happens. For instance, an unintended consequence of expecting student teachers to be prematurely expert and independent, and able to work without the support of school based professional networks, for all that is professionally deficient about such scenarios (Hall et al. 2012, p. 113), newcomers at least enjoy the freedom to attempt to give effect to changes in workplace practices. With respect to the specific focus of my study, in Hodkinson and Hodkinson's (2004a) study of school teachers, beginning teachers had more confidence and experience in using computers and information technology more generally than did their senior colleagues. As a consequence of acting as catalysts for technology integration in schools, in addition to developing their own pedagogical identities through sharing their technology-related expertise, informal, frequently unrecognised, contributions on the part of beginning teachers to the learning of their experienced colleagues, occurred.

Thus, in learning to teach, a beginner draws on a complex array of variables, which are difficult for researchers to disentangle (Davis and Sumara 1997). Because learning to teach occurs over time and is contextualised and unpredictable, individual beginning teachers' developmental trajectories are, in varying degrees, idiosyncratic, with differences in temperament as well as context helping to account for why each beginner develops their own partly idiosyncratic and partly shared understanding of the process (Bullough 2009). It is unsurprising, therefore, that Smagorinsky et al. (2003) borrow Vygotsky's (1987) metaphor of the 'twisting path' to characterise learning to teach. In my study, with both temporal and spatial connotations in mind, two such interrelated and overlapping "twisting paths", journeyed by beginners as they learn to teach, are chosen for exploration. These are, firstly, beginners' evolving sense of the complexity of teaching and, secondly, the developmental nature of significant beginning experiences.

2.9.4 Beginners' evolving sense of the complexity of teaching

Because it occurs over time and is contextualised and unpredictable, researching how teachers learn to teach proves difficult for researchers to disentangle and understand. Yet, despite the difficult nature of the terrain, research has considerably enhanced our understanding that teachers learn to teach by drawing on a complex array of internal and external resources, bolstering the view that teacher learning is a complex undertaking (Davis and Sumara 1997; Spalding et al. 2011). Therefore, rather than propagating a uniform representation of beginning practice, increasingly, research undertakings uncover a more subtle and nuanced reality; individual beginning teachers' developmental trajectories manifest, in varying degrees, partly idiosyncratic and partly shared understandings of the process (Darling-Hammond 2006; Bullough

2009; Akkerman and Meijer 2011; Ruohotie-Lyhty 2013; Christensen 2013). In being partly idiosyncratic and partly shared, these understandings of learning to teach mirror Valsiner's (1998, p. 28) perspective on the shaping of human personality as sociogenetic, that is, socially based in origin, while simultaneously being semiautonomous in relation to social context. Hence, individual personalities, while unique in their development, still can be viewed as being similar to one another. Consistent with a view of learning to teach as partly idiosyncratic and partly shared, a significant degree of variation characterises representations of beginning teaching.

On the one hand, beginning teachers' thinking is understood to be more complicated and far richer than traditionally thought, with aspects of beginners' teaching identities developing to the extent that their modes of working become more varied and sophisticated over time (Bullough et al. 2004; Flores 2006; Leshem 2008; Bauml 2009). On the other hand, the development of beginning teachers is conceived of as uneven, uncertain and unfinished (Floden and Clark 1988; Britzman 2003; Helsing 2007; Le Maistre and Paré 2010; McNally et al. 2010; Stronach 2010; Thomas and Beauchamp 2011; Sinner 2012). In short, learning to teach is viewed as being frequently 'out of joint' (Britzman 2007, p. 1). As a result, while not entirely pattern free, teacher development can be understood only very loosely as linear, and stage theories of teacher development, for instance, oversimplify the complex and multi-dimensional nature of learning to teach (Grossman 1992; Watzke 2007; Stronach 2010, p. 215). Ultimately, as Feiman-Nemser (2008) states, the beginning year of practice is "a messy problem space" (p. 697). My study attempts to glean how a sense of the complexity of teaching evolves among beginners during the course of the initial year of practice, post-graduation.

2.9.5 Developmental nature of significant beginning experiences

Identity shaping, on the part of beginning teachers, is a function of a continuous dynamic process of interpretation and re-interpretation of site-specific values, expectations and practices in school-based workplaces (Rodgers and Scott 2008; Wilkins et al. 2012). Specifically, key influences on the shaping of identity are significant experiences or key episodes, encountered in the liminal space of the beginning year of teaching. Temporally, an individual's series of significant stories constitutes a trajectory through time of becoming a certain kind of person (Sfard and Prusak 2005). Spatially, the personal construction of one's stories constitutes the process of situating oneself within a particular social (Akkerman and Meijer 2011) or figured world (Holland et al. 1998).

For a teacher, reflection or forms of self-study, play a key role in coming to understand one's professional knowledge, one's personal educational value system and one's own professional self-understanding; in short, one's sense of identity (Kelchtermans 2008; Beauchamp and Thomas 2009). For example, to shift from an ascribed identity rooted in one's own life history, dominated by transmissionist pedagogy and received knowledge (Belenky et al. 1986), towards cultivating an identity or teaching self that is self-authored, beginning teachers must be developmentally ready to adopt a critical perspective on practice (Rodgers and Scott 2008). Ensuring that beginners possess the developmental capacity to undertake this task is the responsibility, in the first instance, of initial teacher education programmes and, subsequently, those school communities among whom newly-graduated teachers begin their teaching careers. In this respect, Grossman et al. (1999) established that

beginning teachers use the reflective stance they develop during their initial teacher education programme to make sense of their teaching situation. Additionally, for beginners, Devos et al. (2012) state that constructive feedback and support for reflective thinking are central components of mentoring practice. A warm human relationship between the mentor and the mentee, though important, is not sufficient. Ideally, therefore, high levels of contact should exist between initial teacher education providers and schools, thus facilitating beginners to cross the developmental bridge or liminal space between college and workplace more easily. By facilitating participants to engage in retrospective reflection (Conway 2001), my study investigates how beginning teachers understand their development, particularly in relation to coping with key beginning experiences.

2.10 Conclusion

In addition to furnishing an in-depth review of literature pertaining to the shaping of identity, Chapter 2 also outlined two frameworks used to guide my study.

Firstly, drawing on principles derived from theories emanating from the cultural-historical tradition, namely, sociocultural theories; activity theory; figured worlds theory; dialogical self theory; a theoretical framework, utilised as a deductive, interrogative instrument throughout the course of my study, is outlined. Deployed in a broad-based fashion, rather than exhaustively or in a fine-grained manner, these synergistic theories furnish my study with a set of analytical approaches that facilitate an understanding of the complexities inherent to the shaping of beginning teacher identity in the workplace.

Secondly, adapting McNally et al. (2010), who posit that for the beginner in teaching, the trajectory of identity shaping is best understood in dimensional terms, this chapter outlines a framework composed of three dimensions of beginning teacher experience, namely: contextual; emotional; temporo-spatial. Contained within each dimension of experience are a number of sub-themes that help illuminate the actuality of identity shaping while beginning to teach. While the use of a dimensional model fragments the integrated learning experiences of beginning teachers into constituent parts for the purpose of analysis, it is acknowledged that the actual journey articulated by each participant is a more complex whole than the sum of its parts. Dimensions and sub-themes are enmeshed, overlap, compete, and vary in their intensity and applicability to particular participants and contexts, and from one point during the initial year of occupational experience to another. Separable for analytical purposes, but not separate in reality, in one and the same event several dimensions of beginner experience can be at stake simultaneously. Additionally, the incorporation of sociocultural understandings of learning as fundamentally situative, relational and participative, allied to the utilisation of the foundational principles and individual components of activity theory, figured worlds theory, and dialogical self theory, help illuminate the dimensional nature of beginning teacher identity shaping, as perceived by the research informants.

Thus, with respect to the two frameworks guiding my study, no individual theoretical construct or dimensional theme stands alone. As a result, perhaps an appropriate way to conceive of the complexity of beginning teaching is in kaleidoscopic terms. Just as the images of a kaleidoscope change with the constant reshuffling of its component parts, so do the unpredictable, interconnected, ever-changing, mutually constitutive

component parts of identity shaping practice meld, merge and shift throughout the course of the beginning year in the workplace.

In the next chapter, Chapter 3, I detail the methodological elements of my study. A comprehensive account, outlining the selection of participants, and the collection and analysis of data, is provided.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of the present chapter is to comprehensively outline the methodological dimensions of my study. Principally, a detailed account of those elements pertaining to the selection of participants, and the collection and analysis of data, is furnished. In doing so, I heed Punch's (2009, p. 8) advice of not viewing method as a codification of procedures, but rather as information about actual ways of working. Accordingly, this methodological account is not reduced to a set of mechanical steps governing the fieldwork elements of the research undertaking. Instead, the more technical methodological aspects are simplified, and the logic behind them is provided. In these ways, methodolatry, the idolatry of method, is avoided. As well as providing a "how it was done" account, understanding is stressed. In normalising the inherent difficulties, tensions and frustrations of research, I justify the contingencies adopted. After all, some of the best research is insecure and speculative, operating at the level of contingent certainty, as opposed to full understanding and ownership.

Furthermore, a common difficulty encountered by methodological narratives is how to capture the emotional dimension of fieldwork (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, pp. 174-175). High quality research rests upon the craftsmanship of researchers, which goes beyond a mastery of methodological techniques to encompass knowledge of the research topic, sensitivity to the social relation of researcher and participant, and an awareness of epistemological and ethical aspects of research interviewing. Accordingly, this methodological account takes cognizance of the emotional and ethical dimensions of research and acknowledges the necessity for reflexivity on the part of this researcher.

3.1 Methodological choice

The constituent elements of a research undertaking are value laden, with affordances and constraints attaching. Being value laden, methods of inquiry are based on assumptions; assumptions about the nature of the reality being studied and, therefore, assumptions about what constitutes knowledge of that reality (i.e. ontology); assumptions about the relationship between the researcher and the reality being researched (i.e. epistemology); assumptions about what are appropriate ways of building knowledge of that reality (i.e. methodology).

In devising a guiding methodological approach, the 'baggage' accompanying methodological design choices has implications for such factors as, among others, researcher investment, researcher role and participant input. Of equal importance is the impact of methodological choice on what is learned about the subject of the research inquiry (Packard and Conway 2006). As a consequence, methodological choice is fundamentally important, as is the clarity or 'fit' between the various choices made. In gleaning the perspectives of beginning primary teachers on their identity shaping experiences in the workplace, the following sections outline some of the methodological design choices made and the implications of making such choices.

3.1.1 Interpretive genre

Four genres have been central in empirical teacher education research, namely, effects of teacher education, interpretive, practitioner, and design (Borko et al. 2007, p. 3; Borko et al. 2008, p. 1025). Of these, the principles of the interpretive research genre inform my study.

The interpretive researcher, Bassey (1999, p. 43) opines, cannot accept the idea of there being a reality 'out there' which exists irrespective of people, for reality is seen as a construct of the human mind. Accordingly, the central endeavour of the interpretive researcher is "to understand the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen et al. 2007, p. 21). To retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated, efforts are made to understand from within. In short, as in the present undertaking, the subjective experience of the research participant is at the centre of the inquiry.

In interpretive enquiries researchers make an interpretation of what they see, hear, and understand. Their interpretations, however, as in my case, cannot be separated from their own backgrounds, history, contexts, and prior understandings. Researchers recognise that their own backgrounds shape their interpretation, and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their personal, cultural, and historical experiences. Additionally, after a research account is issued, the "hazardous passage from writing to reading" (Stake 2005, p. 455) ensures that, in addition to the researcher and research participants, readers also make yet other interpretations of the study (Creswell 2009, p. 8 and p. 176). Thus, in seeking to perceive, describe, analyse, and interpret features of a specific situation or context, preserving its complexity and communicating the perspectives of the actual participants, interpretive studies have contributed to an image of teaching as a complex intellectual endeavour that unfolds in an equally complex sociocultural context (Borko et al., 2007, p. 5; Borko et al. 2008, p. 1025). My study subscribes to these understandings of teaching, characteristic of the interpretive research genre.

3.1.2 Constructivist paradigm

In social science research undertakings, the word paradigm is generally understood to mean perspective (Scott and Morrison 2007, p. 169). Given the nature of the present enquiry, my research is undertaken within the ambit of the constructivist paradigm, typically associated with qualitative research designs that are described as contextual, inclusive, involved and emergent (Mertens 2010, p. 452). The basic assumptions guiding the constructivist paradigm are that people active in the research process socially construct knowledge, and that researchers should attempt to understand the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of the research participants who live it (Schwandt 2000 cited in Mertens 2010, p. 16; Punch 2009, p. 18; Creswell 2009, p. 8). Consequently, my research methodology is principally influenced by the assumptions of the constructivist paradigm.

However, the blurring, interbreeding and complementarity of various research paradigms, is increasingly stressed (Taber 2007, p. 54). In focusing on beginning teachers, I am, arguably, researching the experiences of a relatively marginalised grouping within the educational system. Incidentally, though referring to student teachers, Akin states that novices' experience is written out of the teaching text by the plethora of programmes and policies that neither ask what they think, nor care what they feel (2002, p. 67 cited in Deegan 2008, p. 186). With respect to the acknowledgement of marginality in my study, the influence of the transformative paradigm, on its constructivist equivalent, is particularly notable (Lincoln and Guba 2000 cited in Mertens 2005, p. 231; Guba and Lincoln 2005, p. 191). Thus, it may be possible to claim that elements of the transformative paradigm also attach to my research approach.

3.1.3 Ontological orientation

Ontology refers to the form and nature of reality. Guided by the constructivist assumption that reality is not absolute and that, instead, multiple, socially constructed realities exist that are time and context dependent (Mertens 2010, p. 226), ontologically, my research goal is to understand the multiple, social constructions of meaning and knowledge, and complex worlds of lived experience, as understood by the participating beginning teacher informants. In this respect, my study privileges the "insider" perspectives of the participating beginning teachers, focusing on their understandings of processes in the settings in which they learn to teach (Borko et al. 2007, p. 5). My intent is to make sense of the experiential knowledge and meanings beginning teachers have about their worlds. The focus is on understanding how individual beginning teachers create and understand their life spaces (Mertens 2010, p. 235). Seeking the perceptions of others in the research locations; fellow teachers, pupils, principals, parents and teaching assistants, for instance, does not form part of my study.

While the individual beginning teacher is the primary unit of analysis (Yin 2009, p. 29), the boundaries of the enquiry are broadened (Stark and Torrance 2005, p. 34; Berg 2009, p. 322) via a focus on the individual beginning teacher acting in activity systems, and within groups and contexts composed of individuals (Gutierrez and Rogoff 2003). Therefore, my study strives towards understanding the shaping of beginning teachers' identities within school-based and wider, out-of-school "cultural systems of action" (Feagin et al. 1990 cited in Tellis 1997, p. 6).

3.1.4 Epistemological stance

Epistemology refers to the relationship between the researcher and the reality being researched. Epistemologically, adherence to the principles of the constructivist paradigm is evident in my study in that the guiding theoretical framework is rooted in contexts and persons other than the researcher. In this manner, a guiding theoretical framework emerged from a review of conceptual and empirical practice-based literature, informed by the principles of sociocultural theories (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998), activity theory (Engeström 1987, 1999, 2001), figured worlds theory (Holland et al. 1998) and dialogical self theory (Hermans 1996, 2012; Akkerman and Meijer 2011). These theories are synergistic, and when utilised together provide a richer view of the shaping of beginning teacher identities than either could offer in isolation.

The broad-based nature of the guiding combination of sociocultural theories, activity theory, figured worlds theory and dialogical self theory, ensures that at the analysis stage of the undertaking, data uncovered in the field are related to 'broad philosophical positions' rather than narrowly to 'the theories of any one academic specialisation' (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 238). In my study, this means that just as the actions and perceptions of the beginning teacher research participants are accorded attention, so too are the social and historical contexts within which beginning teaching is enacted (Ragin and Becker 1992 cited in Stark and Torrance 2005).

Table 3A provides an overview of issues relating to ontological and epistemological choice-making in my study.

Table 3A: Overview of ontological and epistemological choice-making

Research related philosophical concept	**Paradigm-defining question (Guba & Lincoln 2005)**	**Interpretative/ Constructivist Assumptions**	**Implications for my study**
Ontology	What is the nature of reality?	Reality is a construct of the human mind. Multiple, socially constructed realities.	Understand complex world of lived experience from viewpoint of research participants who live it Subjective experiences of research participants at centre of inquiry.
Epistemology	What is the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and the would-be known?	Interactive link between researcher and participants. Guiding conceptual framework rooted in contexts and persons other than the researcher. Emerges from a review of conceptual and empirical practice-based literature.	Incorporation, as animating principles, of broad-based theoretical understandings of learning. Act as deductive, interrogative instruments.

3.2 Research participants: Recruitment and selection

Graduating, in June 2010, from five different initial teacher education programmes, hosted in three different colleges, namely, St. Patrick's College, Dublin; Mary Immaculate College, Limerick; and Hibernia College - which provides an accredited post-graduate initial teacher education programme online and on a blended learning

basis - the selection of nine beginning primary teacher research participants for my study followed a replication rather than a sampling logic (Yin 2009). Therefore, instead of selecting a random sample, during the early months of 2010, a volunteer cohort of final-year student teachers was recruited via the 'snowball' sampling method. 'Snowball' sampling relies on referrals from initial participants to generate additional participants (Cohen et al. 2007, p. 116; Berg 2009, p. 51; Punch 2009, p. 163).

Accordingly, in late January 2010, I invited expressions of interest from final-year student teachers, through distribution of an information pack entitled *'Invitation to participate in a study of beginning primary teachers'* (Appendix 1). I was facilitated in this process by three lecturers who were attached to three different Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes i.e. St. Patrick's College, Dublin, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick and Hibernia College. In their respective work settings, each lecturer provided a brief outline of the research undertaking to a number of their final year students, stressing the voluntary nature of participation. My hope was that prospective volunteers would, in turn, recommend participation in the project to a colleague or colleagues. As it transpired, by April 2010, a total of thirty-two, final year student teachers, across all three colleges, had volunteered to participate in my study.

In selecting nine beginning teacher research participants from among the cohort of thirty-two volunteers, overriding considerations related to feasibility, manageability and the vagaries of the beginning teacher employment market. Also acting as determinants in the final selection of research participants were such factors as the

nature of individual employment contracts, school type and size, and the geographic location of workplace settings. Ultimately, the research undertaking included beginning teachers who worked in a variety of primary school settings, namely: single gender, mixed gender, socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged, urban and rural (Table 3B). In this manner, the selection of "maximum variation cases" enhances the heterogeneity of the research cohort and frequently reveals more information because more actors and more basic mechanisms are activated in the situations studied (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 230).

As a sampling logic is not used, typical sampling criteria are irrelevant. In any case, when the objective is to achieve the greatest possible amount of information on a given phenomenon, a random sample may not be the most appropriate strategy. Instead, the generalisability of case studies can be increased by the strategic selection of cases (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 229). Crucially, the degree to which the research cohort can be considered to be representative is strengthened, thus enhancing the generalisability (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 229) and transferability (Mertens 2010, p. 259) of the research claims. A majority, six of the nine research participants are female. However, as gender does not feature as a focus of study in the research undertaking, it did not inform the composition of the participating cohort (Table 3B).

Table 3B: General characteristics of research cohort

Teacher Gender and Pseudonym	College & Initial Teacher Education Programme [Graduated 2010]	Class Level Taught (2010/2011)	School Type	Employment Status (2010/2011)
1 (Female) **Geraldine**	Mary Immaculate College: Graduate Diploma in Education	5th class	All Girls [Urban]	Temporary
2 (Male) **Liam**	Mary Immaculate College: Bachelor of Education	3rd class	Mixed Gender [Suburban/Rural]	Temporary
3 (Female) **Danielle**	St. Patrick's College: Bachelor of Education	3rd class	All Girls [Urban]	Temporary
4 (Male) **Oisín**	St. Patrick's College: Graduate Diploma in Education	2nd class	Mixed Gender [Rural]	Permanent
5 (Male) **Niall**	Mary Immaculate College: Bachelor of Education	4th class	Mixed Gender [Urban]	Temporary
6 (Female) **Olivia**	Hibernia College: Higher Diploma in Arts in Primary Education	1st class	Mixed Gender [Rural]	Temporary
7 (Female) **Fiona**	Mary Immaculate College: Bachelor of Education	3rd class	Mixed Gender [Suburban/Rural]	Temporary
8 (Female) **Bernadette**	Mary Immaculate College: Bachelor of Education	2nd class	Mixed Gender [Urban] [Gaelscoil]	Temporary
9 (Female) **Ruth**	Mary Immaculate College: Bachelor of Education	5th class	Mixed Gender [Urban] [Gaelscoil]	Permanent

3.3 Multiple-Case study research design

Subscribing to a need for methodological rigor (Kelchtermans 2008), in ascertaining the mutually constitutive nature of workplace experience and the shaping of beginning teacher identity over time [one school-year], and across contexts [nine beginning teachers, in nine varied workplace settings], a multiple-case study research design was employed (Stake 2005; Stake 2006; Yin 2009).

Stake (2005, pp. 445-446), helpfully, distinguishes between three types of case study: intrinsic case study, instrumental case study, and multiple-case study.

An intrinsic case study describes an undertaking where the particularities or specificities of the case are the focus of study. The degree to which the case is deemed representative or generic is not of primary importance to the researcher. Alternatively, the motivation for undertaking an instrumental case study relates to a desire on the part of the researcher to generalise or externalise from the case. The particularities of the case can still be of interest to the researcher, as no clear line of demarcation or polarity distinguishes intrinsic from instrumental case studies. This means that particular and general agendas can simultaneously attach to a given case study. Stake utilises the term 'zone of combined purpose' (2005, p. 445) to describe such a scenario. Similarly, Simons refers to" the paradox of case study" (1996, p. 1 and 2009, p. 167) when describing the capacity of the case study approach to simultaneously yield both unique and universal understandings. However, when researcher interest is somewhat distant from the particularistic concerns of the intrinsic case study, a number of cases may be studied jointly i.e. a multiple-case study is devised which amplifies the values of the instrumental case study. Accordingly, several cases are chosen for study in the belief that understanding them

will lead to better understanding, and conceivably better theorising, about a still larger collection of cases or possibly an entire population. In essence, a multiple-case study equates to the extension of instrumental study to several cases. As a result, multiple-case designs "immeasurably expand the external generalisability" of study claims and the evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling and robust (Yin 2009, p. 53). Yin (2003, 2006, 2009), however, Bassey (1999, p. 27) opines, tends towards the positivist (or scientific) paradigm whereas Stake (2005, 2006) is firmly within the interpretive paradigm. In my study, the inclusion of a range of beginning teacher perspectives, enhances the degree to which the research claims are representative, a function of multiple, socially constructed meanings and realities. Thus, the issue of generalization, as it applies to a qualitative study of the present kind, is best understood in terms of Bassey's (1999, p.4) interpretive concept of "fuzzy generalization" or, indeed, in terms of Thomas's (2010, 2011, 2012) concept of 'exemplary knowledge', rather than in quasi-scientific terms, as enunciated by Yin (2003, 2006, 2009).

3.4 The principles of particularisability and generalisability

My study subscribes to both the principles of 'particularisability' and 'generalisability'. Accordingly, the study attempts to provide in-depth accounts of individual beginning teachers as well as determining the features that are common to these individual accounts. In seeking both what is commonplace and particular about beginning teacher cases, my study emulates the example of Walker (2010, p. 2).

Generalisability is a concept that is rooted in the postpositivist paradigm and technically refers to the ability to generalise results of research conducted with a sample to a population that the sample represents. Differences of opinion exist in the

qualitative research community with regard to claims that can be made about the generalisability of findings. Though my selection of nine 'maximum variation cases' (Flyvbjerg 2006, p.230) grants useful information about the broader class (Ruddin 2006), cognisant of the distinction between case inference and statistical inference, the limitations of generalising from my study are acknowledged. Instead, case study methodology is contextual and promotes a type of *phronesis* or craft knowledge, a tacit knowing whose underlying ethos is practical rather than theoretical (Thomas 2010, 2011, 2012). Therefore, instead of generalisability, the concept of transferability is more appropriately applied to my study. With this approach, the burden of proof for generalisability lies with the reader, and I, as researcher, bear responsibility for providing the thick description that allows the reader to make a judgement about the applicability of the research to another setting (Mertens 2010, p.430).

Stake's (2005, pp. 445-446) identification of three types of case study; intrinsic, instrumental and multiple case studies, aids our understanding of how the principles of 'particularisability' and 'generalisability' can be simultaneously addressed within a research undertaking. This is rendered possible as the individual components of Stake's (2005) typology represent, respectively, the interests of particularity, generality and, in the case of multiple case studies, an amplification or enhancement of the notion of generality. Of particular help, however, in conceiving how to simultaneously address the obligations of 'particularisability' and 'generalisability', is Stake's (2005, p. 445) assertion that "there is no hard-and-fast line distinguishing intrinsic case study from instrumental, but rather a zone of combined purpose". Located within Stake's (2005) "zone of combined purpose" (p. 445), my study also

subscribes to Simons (1996, 2009) notion of 'the paradox of case study' i.e. the paradoxical capacity of the case study approach to "yield both unique and universal understanding" (Simons 1996, p. 225).

3.4.1 Particularisability

The principle of particularisability is manifest in the present undertaking in two respects. Particular, in the first instance, in being located in the specific context of the Irish primary school system, this research project can also be considered to adhere to the principle of particularisability in its recognition that a focus on the generalised "global nature" (Yin 2009, p. 50) of beginning teacher identity shaping may cause the researcher to lose sight of that which is unique about each of the nine cases studied. Therefore, rather than only valuing the individual components of the multiple-case study for the contribution they make to generalisations, the intrinsic value of each of the nine individual beginning teacher cases, is also recognised. Stake's (2005, p. 457) advice to researchers of not losing sight of that which is unique about each case, in an effort to make comparisons with other cases, is heeded. A comparative agenda sidelines uniqueness and complexity as it obscures any case knowledge that fails to facilitate comparison (Simons 1996, p. 227). Therefore, consistent with the core objective of interpretive research, my research undertaking is, to a large extent, a search for local meanings (Erickson 1986 cited in Borko et al. 2007, p. 4).

Consistent with this approach, local variation is captured among the nine research participants through fine-grained descriptions of settings and actions, and through interpretation of how individual beginning teachers make sense of their contexts and activities. Consequently, informed by Lave's (1996) assertion that: "There are enormous differences in what and how learners come to shape (or be shaped) into

their identities with respect to different practices……." (pp. 161-162), my research undertaking seeks to describe, analyse and interpret features in each of nine research settings, preserving their individual complexities and communicating the individual perspectives of the nine research participants (Borko et al. 2007, p. 4). Told in vignettes and fragments of story, my task is to re-create the moment as a beginning teacher lived it. Viewed in terms of 'this story, in this place, at this time', my study seeks to tell the stories of particular beginners and, in doing so, to convince the reader that particular stories express a wider truth.

3.4.2 Generalisability

My study subscribes to the principle of generalisability by seeking to identify similarities across nine workplace contexts. In focusing on the "global nature" of beginning teacher identity shaping, my study is considered to consist of multiple holistic cases (Yin 2009, p. 50). Illustrating how phenomena occur in the circumstances of several exemplars, as in my multiple-case study, can provide valued and trustworthy knowledge (Stake 2005, pp. 458-459), referred to as exemplary knowledge by Thomas (2010, 2011, 2012). The choice of nine research participants, whose beginning occupational experiences occur in a variety of primary school settings, strengthens the representativeness of the research cohort, thus enhancing the generalisability (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 229) and transferability (Mertens 2010, p. 259) of the research claims.

Subscribing to the principle of generalisability is mainly a function of the theoretical approach adopted (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 233; Yin 2009, pp. 130-131). This involves utilising the propositions or abstractions of substantive or content-based theory to deductively describe and explain the phenomenon being studied (Punch

2009, p. 20). When generalisability is a goal, and we are focusing on the potential common elements in a case, it is necessary for the analysis of case study data to be conducted at a sufficient level of abstraction (Kelchtermans 2008, p. 30). The more abstract the concept, the more generalisable it is. Developing abstract concepts and propositions raises the analysis above simple description, and in this way case study data can contribute potentially generalisable findings (Punch 2009, p. 122; Thomas and James 2006).

Accordingly, a theoretically informed conceptual framework - predicated on the principles of sociocultural theories; activity theory; figured worlds theory; and dialogical self theory - was devised to guide the fieldwork phase of the study, undertake a theoretically informed reading of all data, and draw connections between the data and larger theoretical issues (Simons 2009, p. 168). Importantly, therefore, my research undertaking is theory-led (Simons 2009, p. 22) rather than engaged in a process of theory verification (Punch 2009, p. 23). A theory-led undertaking does not seek to test or verify a specific theory, rather it utilises a specific theory to guide data collection. Employing a theory-led, deductive approach of this kind helps to address a central limitation of research in the interpretive genre i.e. the lack of shared conceptual frameworks and designs. This limitation makes it a challenging task to aggregate claims and to draw comparisons across studies, even when those studies are of similar phenomena (Borko et al. 2007, p. 5). By seeking to identify patterns transcending individual settings, claims arising from my research undertaking are set in a wider context of theoretically informed current themes and preoccupations relating to the mutually constitutive dynamic between the inherent multidimensionality of workplace experience and the shaping of emergent identities.

3.4.3 Particularisability and generalisability: Obligations and tensions

Despite remaining mindful of that which is unique about each case, the employment of a deductive, guiding theoretical framework runs the risk of privileging the instrumental elements of the undertaking. This, potentially, can lead me as researcher to become over committed to the causes of theorisation and normative generalisation and, as a consequence, to become diverted from the intrinsic features of individual cases.

A consequent development of tension between the obligations of particularisability and generalisability is acknowledged. To assuage this tension, the accentuation of differences between the instrumental and intrinsic elements of my study, is avoided. Instead, as already outlined, my study subscribes to Stake's (2005) notion of the intrinsic and instrumental dimensions of the study co-occupying "a zone of combined purpose" (p. 445). Positioning my study in this way is achieved by two means. Firstly, the paradoxical capacity of the case study approach "to yield both unique and universal understanding" (Simons 1996, p. 225) is harnessed. Secondly, the study utilises to the notion of 'fuzzy generalisation' (Bassey 1999, 2001), especially with respect to the instrumental elements of the undertaking.

3.4.4 The paradox of case study

Positivistic accounts of the research process frequently cite the difficulty of generalising from the case study approach. Yet, Simons (2009, pp. 164-167) outlines five approaches commonly used by researchers to generalise from a case study: cross-case generalisation, naturalistic generalisation, concept generalisation, process

generalisation, and, situated generalisation. While not dependent upon generalising in a propositional sense, as is customary in positivist research, nonetheless, these five generalisation approaches move out from the specifics of a case to other cases and, consequently, are helpful in extending the use of claims from a single case to other situations. Of these five approaches, perhaps the example of cross-case generalisation, commonly used in multiple-case designs, would seem most suitable for my study. Utilising this approach, via a process of cross-case analysis, common issues and interconnecting themes are identified between the cases studied. While, undoubtedly, an element of the cross-case approach attaches to the deductive, theoretical dimension of the study, a sixth approach to the issue of generalisation, the in-depth particularisation - universal understanding approach (Simons 2009, p. 167), seems, potentially, to represent a more generative option for incorporation in my study.

Unlike the other five generalisation approaches, the sixth approach does not move out from the specifics of a case to other cases. Instead, it advocates arriving at a universal understanding or insight through intense, in-depth particularisation (Simons 2009). Cases studied in all their particularity possess the potential to deliver understandings and insights that are, at once, specific, unique and particular, as well as being general and universal. This represents the paradox of case study (Simons 1996, 2009; Punch 2009, p. 122) and refers to the capacity of the case study approach to generate generalised understandings via insights developed through an in-depth exploration of the particular. To best undertake the task of deriving generalised understandings from in-depth explorations of the particularities of cases, Simons (2009, p. 167) advocates engagement with the paradox within the case, the tension between the universal and the particular, and the ambiguity or conflict it presents. Therefore, far from attempting

to ignore the tensions arising from the paradoxical nature of case study, I will adopt Simons (1996, 2009) advice of staying with the particularities of (nine beginning teacher) cases in all their contradictions and ambiguity. In doing so, Simons (2009, p. 167) opines, we arrive at universal understandings in case study research much as we gain insights from specific works of art or literature about universal human or social truths. Of necessity, therefore, this research undertaking lives with and embraces the paradox of case study; the simultaneous study of the singularity and the search for generalisation. As a result, all generalisations that tend towards the positivistic are avoided and the concept of fuzzy generalisation (Bassey 1999, 2001) is, instead, employed.

3.4.5 Fuzzy generalisation

Bassey (1999, 2001) distinguishes between three types of generalisation: scientific, statistical/probabilistic, and fuzzy. Educational research shares with research in the other social sciences the problem that, because it is social and about human beings, it inevitably embraces a multitude of variables. This precludes the making of scientific or statistical/probabilistic generalisations. Bassey believes, however, that fuzzy generalisation offers a viable solution to the problem of generalisation in educational research and across the social sciences.

Fuzzy generalisation differs from both scientific and statistical/probabilistic generalisations in having an element of uncertainty built into it. In advancing the idea of fuzzy generalisation, Bassey appeals to the idea of fuzzy logic. The consequence of this is that truth becomes a matter of degree. Though the concept is criticised by Thomas (2011), Bassey regards fuzzy generalisation as a way of generalising the

results of educational research, and especially of case study work, that does not exceed the level of confidence that can reasonably be extended to them. Fuzzy generalisation claims that it is possible, or likely, or unlikely that what was established in a particular case, or cases, as with the present study, will be found in similar situations elsewhere. In short, it is a qualified, tentative generalisation, proposing the idea of possibility but not of certainty (1999, p. 52).

However, Bassey's claim that fuzzy generalisation is distinct from scientific and statistical/probabilistic generalisations, is criticised by Hammersley (2001). Claiming that all three forms of generalisation are, in fact, of the same kind, Hammersley criticises the concept of fuzzy generalisation on the basis that the qualities of tentativeness and uncertainty, invoked on behalf of fuzzy generalisation, also attach to both its scientific and statistical/probabilistic equivalents. This is based on the premise that certainty only applies to scientific generalisations within the conditions in which the experiment was undertaken. Equally, in the case of statistical/probabilistic generalisations, certainty diminishes with distance, both real and conceptual, from the site of the sample on which the generalisation is based. Therefore, Hammersley (2001) contends, 'fuzziness' is not a defining feature of a distinct type of generalisation but, rather, a quality that is characteristic of all forms of generalisation. While accepting that 'fuzziness' does not constitute a unique form of generalisation, nonetheless, the tentative and uncertain nature of 'fuzzy generalisation' informs my study, especially with respect to the theoretically orientated, instrumental elements of the undertaking. In this fashion, coupled with harnessing the paradoxical capacity of case study to yield both unique and universal understandings (Simons 1996, 2009), the research undertaking seeks to give effect to Stake's (2005) notion of the intrinsic

and instrumental dimensions of a study co-occupying "a zone of combined purpose" (p. 445).

3.5 Data collection methods

In my research undertaking, data collection occurred during the course of the beginning teacher research participants' initial year of occupational experience, post-graduation, i.e. 2010/2011 school year.

In research undertakings informed by the interpretive genre, participants' voice and discourse are critical to capture. Researchers, therefore, conduct interviews, and review written artefacts such as reflective journals (Borko et al. 2007, p. 5). Accordingly, my study employed two principal methods of data collection; individual, face-to-face semi-structured interviews, and the maintenance of solicited digital diaries (or e-mail logs) by research participants. Additionally, the story-line method was utilised as supplementary methods of data collection. Unlike less comprehensive approaches to research, this multi-round collection of data captures the progressive shaping of beginners' identities.

An expectation that interview data would somehow "speak for themselves" (Yin 2006, p.117) was not adhered to. Instead, from the outset, when defining the specific research questions, constituting the theoretically informed interview domains framing three, individual semi-structured interview schedules, some key assumptions were made with respect to analysing the data set. As a result, the theory led analysis of data is directed by these *a priori* theoretical assumptions (Thomas and James 2006, p.783).

A detailed examination of the three, individual semi-structured interview schedules (Appendix 2; Appendix 3; Appendix 4), reveals that principles derived from sociocultural theories, and activity theory, particularly, determine their layout and content. As the study progressed, additional principles derived from figured worlds theory and dialogical self theory, further enhanced the theoretical reading of interview data, and of data derived from additional sources i.e. solicited digital diaries (Appendix 5) and the story-line method (Appendix 6; Appendix 7; Appendix 8).

3.5.1 Individual, semi-structured interview

Individual, face-to-face semi-structured interview was a principal method of data collection employed. In the case of each research participant, a three-cycle, multi-phase interview design, traced the shaping of beginning identity over time, at three points throughout the first year of occupational experience, post-graduation i.e. November 2010, March 2011, and June 2011 (Appendix 2; Appendix 3; Appendix 4). All forms of interview, whether structured, semi-structured or focus group, prove useful in the context of participants who cannot be directly observed, facilitate participants in the provision of historical information, and allow researchers control over the line of questioning (Creswell 2009, p. 179). All these advantages accrue in the case of my study. A semi-structured interview protocol has the added advantage of asking all informants the same core questions with the freedom to ask follow-up questions that build on the responses received (Mertens 2010, p. 370; Brenner 2006, p. 362). In terms of researcher investment and participant input, a semi-structured interview "can allow for more input on the part of the participant, given the dialogue that may occur and the open-ended nature of the format" (Packard and Conway 2006, p. 259). In the case of my study, a semi-structured interview format facilitates the

probing of pre-determined issues outlined in the research questions, in addition to enabling other issues relevant to participants to emerge (Borko et al. 2007; Yin 1993, 2006, 2009).

Working within the constructivist paradigm, the approach employed in my study is closer to Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009, pp. 48-49) depiction of the research interviewer as 'traveler' rather than 'miner'. In adopting the approach of 'traveler', the intention is not to explore the world of the beginning teacher participant as unknown territory. Rather, an outline map (i.e. theoretically informed guiding framework), and navigational instruments (i.e. three semi-structured interview schedules), guide me in deliberately and deductively seeking out specific sites (i.e. beginning teachers' perspectives of identity shaping experiences). Self-awareness on the part of the researcher of being either a 'miner' or a 'traveler' is crucially important, as researcher perspective impacts significantly on fine-tuning the focus of the research inquiry (Packard and Conway 2006, p. 266). Accordingly, I was conscious at all stages of the research undertaking of being, in Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) terms, a 'traveler' rather than a 'miner'. Although, given the artificiality of their boundaries, and consequent leakage between paradigms, aspects of the interviewer as 'miner' also informed the research approach. There are no unequivocal quality criteria for research interviews. A good interview rests upon the craftsmanship of the researcher, which goes beyond a mastery of questioning techniques to encompass knowledge of the research topic, sensitivity to the social relation of interviewer and interviewee, and an awareness of epistemological and ethical aspects of research interviewing.

3.5.2 Solicited digital diaries (e-mail logs)

Maintenance of diaries or logs by research participants is deemed useful for a number of reasons, namely: they enable the researcher to obtain the language and words of participants; they can be accessed at a time convenient to the researcher and, therefore, constitute an unobtrusive source of information. Additionally, the outside-of-time-and-space aspect of the e-mail environment provides participants with an opportunity for reflection in an unpressured environment. As such, participants are afforded an opportunity to hear their own voices against the backdrop of the normative voices they hear so loudly in the context of school (Rodgers and Scott 2008, p. 747). Thus, diaries represent a thoughtful form of data in that participants have an opportunity to give attention to their compilation (Creswell 2009, p. 180; Scott and Morrison 2007).

Maintenance of a diary or log by each of the nine research participants is utilised in my study as a second principal method of data collection. However, rather than maintaining a traditional, paper-based diary, participants were requested to maintain a digital diary to be submitted to the researcher via e-mail. Requesting the research participants to create and maintain a digital or e-mail log was decided upon for a number of reasons. Firstly, constructivist methodology envisages the utilisation of documents produced by members of the group being studied. Secondly, to rely exclusively on a single type of evidence (i.e. individual interviews) would be to depend on a narrow evidentiary base. The research undertaking would, in that case, be an open-ended interview study, a variant of a survey, and not really a case study (Yin 2006, p. 116). Thirdly, and importantly, at the design stage of my study, it was deemed necessary to offset the ‘snapshot’ nature of the three-cycle, multi-phase interview process by utilizing a data collection instrument that was more in

longitudinal touch with the everyday nature of beginning teaching. The solicitation of a digital diary from each research participant was deemed the most feasible means of maintaining this type of longitudinal contact. In doing so, I heed the warning of Stark and Torrance (2005) that an over-reliance on interviewing runs the risk of the research undertaking being locked into the "here-and-now of participants' perceptions" (p. 35).

Requested to describe their learning experiences in a story-like manner, the maintenance of the digital diary (or e-mail log) facilitates the recording of incidents and events deemed significant by participants in the context of their identity shaping experiences as beginning teachers. Thus, the maintenance of a diary by each research participant proved generative, as the digital diaries are used not only to identify patterns of behaviour, but also to provide greater insight into how individuals interpret situations and ascribe meanings to actions and events (Alaszewski 2006, p.37).
Maintenance of the diary was accomplished by the participants both by means of time sampling (i.e. the logging of incidental incidents) and by the recording of critical incidents and events deemed significant in the context of their learning as beginning teachers on an occasional basis. Critical incidents refer to unplanned, unanticipated, and uncontrolled experiences and critical events to planned occasions, for instance, a planned visit from a school inspector or a pre-arranged parent-teacher meeting. In these ways, my research endeavour gleans evidence of the shaping of beginning identity, principally through attempting to detect changing forms of participation, on the part of beginning teachers, in their respective communities of practice.

The collection of data via paper-based diary entry is controlled in a number of ways: provision of a structured method of recording data; guidance on using the diary

recording system; training in maintaining the diary; provision of a mechanism for checking the accuracy of the diary entries (Alaszewski, 2006, pp. 66-83). In my study, however, controlling data collection, via e-mail log, is a function of the medium used. Accordingly, during the period of the 2010/2011 school year, participants were requested to e-mail one digital diary entry every three weeks to my e-mail account. In total, each participant was obliged to submit twelve digital diary entries, as per an agreed schedule (Appendix 5). This arrangement ensured it was possible to monitor levels of participant compliance. By contrast, despite the best efforts of researchers, maintenance of a traditional, paper-based diary or log remains in the control of the research participant. The length and composition of digital diary entries was at the discretion of individual participants. Verbal agreement in relation to these arrangements was secured from each participant at the outset of the research undertaking.

3.5.3 Story-line method

At the conclusion of the third individual interview, in June 2011, each participant was requested to reflect on their actual experience of the 2010/2011 school year i.e. their first year of occupational experience, post-graduation. Additionally, participants were invited to anticipate future possibilities, likely to affect their professional lives. Using the story-line method to capture participants' perceptions of their developing identities, this reflective process exhibited both retrospective and prospective (or future-orientated) elements (Conway 2001; Meijer et al. 2011). Therefore, each participant was presented with a page on which were drawn two axis lines. The X axis represents the progression of the 2010/2011 school year, in addition to the 'future', as represented by the second year of teaching and beyond; hence the retrospective and

prospective dimensions of the story-line exercise. The Y axis represents a participant's overall sense of professional accomplishment as a beginning teacher (Appendix 6).

Data collection, utilising the story-line method, followed a three-step procedure:

Step A: Each participant drew a line, capturing, in their view, their overall sense of professional accomplishment as a beginning teacher, and their evaluation of experiences, as represented by the progression of the line, during that development.

Step B: Participants marked their key experiences and annotations on that line. In annotating their story-lines, participants retrospectively recounted critical incidents and events that constituted their beginning professional experiences. In addition, prospective annotations took the form of participant expressions of teaching-related hopes and fears for the future. The compilation of these retrospective and prospective annotations serves the purpose of crystallisation (triangulation); the visual story-line medium is supplemented by means of textual annotation i.e. a combination of visual and textual data co-authoring (Appendix 6).

Step C: The nominated key experiences were the starting point for the final step of the story-line exercise. Each participant was presented with a blank template and invited to provide a brief written account in relation to three key experiences, considered, retrospectively, as representing a 'high point', 'low point' and 'turning

point' of the beginning year. In elaborating on these experiences in written format, participants furnished a more detailed account of key developmental experiences. Additionally, participants were requested to comment on their teaching-related hopes and aspirations as well as their teaching-related fears and concerns for the future (Appendix 7).

As well as requesting participants to reflect on their actual experiences, as described above, a second story-line exercise requested participants to engage in a reconstructed anticipation of the first year as a beginning teacher from the viewpoint of September 2010, the commencing month of their initial year of occupational experience, post-graduation. As with the story-line recollection of actual experiences, in this instance, also, each participant marked the key experiences and accompanying annotations of their 'reconstructed anticipations' onto their story-line template (Appendix 8). Reconstructed anticipations "assist in portraying the phenomenology of learning to teach" (Conway 2001, p.93) and, in this study, facilitate a comparative exercise where the anxieties and aspirations, characteristic of reconstructed anticipations (Appendix 8), are compared to participants' actual experiences of their first year of teaching (Appendix 6, Appendix 7).

Methodologically, adoption of the story-line approach confers a number of advantages on my study. Historically, images preceded the use of spoken and written means of communication and still, frequently, possess the capacity to convey complex ideas more efficiently and effectively than do word-based media. In my study, heavily dominated by verbal modes of communication i.e. a three-cycle, multi-phase interview design, composed of individual, face-to-face semi-structured interviews, the appeal of an easily constructed visual mode of representation to participants, and to

this researcher, was immediately apparent and unanimously "perceived …… as an interesting and creative mode of self-expression" (Beijaard 1995 cited in Conway 2001, p. 94). Also advantageous, from my viewpoint, was the extension of my repertoire of data collection instruments. Additionally, in facilitating the identification of critical incidents and events, the story-line approach allowed articulation of narrative knowledge held by participants. It also facilitated a process of crystallisation (triangulation), as critical events and incidents are also represented in textual format (digital diary), and through discussion (individual, semi-structured interviews).

Conceptually, use of the story-line method to record beginning teachers' retrospective and prospective (anticipatory) reflections ensures that, in conceiving of temporality and reflection, a dominant temporally truncated conception of reflection, which privileges retrospective over prospective reflection, is replaced by a future-orientated, temporally distributed conception of reflection (Conway 2001). The benefit of introducing a temporally distributed conception of reflection to beginning teachers' reflective thought, is apparent in that the story-line exercises, which the participants found most challenging to undertake, were those involving an anticipatory dimension i.e. reconstructed anticipation of the first year as a beginning teacher and anticipation of the second year as a beginning teacher. Perhaps this challenge is a function of "the bias in ……. teacher education…..toward a focus primarily on the past, rather than the future, as part of the present" (Conway 2001, pp. 91-92).

Table 3C provides an overview of the data collection methods employed in my study, rationales for method choice and collection procedures employed.

Table 3C: Data collection methods

Data Collection Method	Implementation	Rationale	Schedule/ Template
Individual, semi-structured interview	Three-cycle, multi-phase interview design: - November 2010 - March 2011 - June 2011	Trace the shaping of beginning identity over time i.e. at three points throughout the first year of occupational experience, post-graduation.	Appendix 2 Appendix 3 Appendix 4
Solicited digital diary (e-mail log)	Planned that each participant submits 12 digital diary entries. An average of nine submissions received from each participant during 2010/2011 school year.	Utilise data collection instrument in longitudinal touch with the everyday nature of beginning teaching. Facilitates the recording of incidents and events deemed significant by participants in the context of their identity shaping experiences.	Appendix 5
Story-line method	Conclusion of third individual interview: - June 2011.	Afford both retrospective and prospective (or future-orientated) reflective opportunities to participants.	Appendix 6 Appendix 7 Appendix 8

3.6 Data volume

A field dilemma, pertaining to all research undertakings, relates to the sufficiency of the volume of data collected. Difficult to define, the term 'sufficient', Bassey (1999, p. 60) notes, is a two-edged word meaning 'not too little, not too much'. Furthermore, a key issue relating to the issue of 'sufficiency' concerns depth versus coverage, and within the logic of a case study approach, the recommended choice is always depth (Stark and Torrance 2005, p. 35).

Table 3D provides an overview of the volume of data collected via the three data collection methods utilised in my study. I trust the volume of data collected displays sufficient depth to allow me to "explore features, create interpretations and test for trustworthiness" (Bassey 1999, p. 60).

Table 3D: Data volume

Data Collection Method / Instrument	**Fieldwork Juncture**	**Schedule/ Template (Location)**	**Data volume per collection procedure**	**Data volume totals**
First individual, semi-structured interview	November 2010	Appendix 2	9 participants x 1 hour	9 hours of interview data
Second individual, semi-structured interview	March 2011	Appendix 3	9 participants x 2 hours	18 hours of interview data
Third individual, semi-structured interview	June 2011	Appendix 4	9 participants x 1.75 hours	16 hours of interview data
				Total: 43 hours of interview data
Solicited digital diaries (e-mail logs)	Duration of 2010/2011 school year	Appendix 5	Average of 9 e-mails per participant submitted	**Total:** c.80 e-mails submitted
			Data volume totals	
Story-line: Exercise 1	Interview 3: June 2011	Appendix 6	**Total:** 9 completed templates.	
Story-line: Exercise 2	Interview 3: June 2011	Appendix 7	**Total**: 9 completed templates. (Writing about story-line)	
Story-line: Exercise 3	Interview 3: June 2011	Appendix 8	**Total:** 9 completed templates. (Reconstructed anticipation).	

3.7 Research questions: Fostering conceptual clarity

To exhibit the considerable degree of selectivity, desirable in a research enquiry, a specific focus is required. Research questions help to define that focus. As a result, the centrality of research questions at all stages of a research undertaking is stressed: question development frames the pre-empirical (or planning) stage of an undertaking; as the undertaking proceeds, research questions guide the empirical (or fieldwork) procedures and furnish the main organising principles for the research report (Punch 2009, pp. 5-6). As such, developing specific research questions is an effective way of achieving both clarity of purpose and a satisfactory 'fit' between the focus of the study and the methodological elements selected to transact the undertaking.

3.7.1 Research questions: Prespecified and unfolding

In my study, a reciprocal messiness, common to all research processes, characterised the manner in which one of the principal methods of data collection, a series of three semi-structured interviews schedules, evolved (Appendix 2; Appendix 3; Appendix 4).

In the first instance, a combination of deductive and inductive approaches guided the design of the interview schedules. In genesis, some research questions were deductively prespecified, others more inductively emergent. Adherence, however, to a deductively orientated, theoretically informed approach, meant that the interview schedules lacked the degree of emergence typical of a more inductively informed approach (Brenner 2006, p. 360).

Furthermore, a time-related field dilemma conspired to limit the extent to which inductive change was a feature of the interview process. At the outset, it was envisaged that interview questions would evolve over time as the research undertaking progressed. Accordingly, it was intended that interview schedules would be adjusted based on the previous interview with each participating individual beginning teacher (Mertens 2010, p. 20). As it transpired, time constraints inhibited iterative data analysis i.e. data analysis between interview rounds. Instead, a form of theoretical sampling took place in the guise of my undertaking a self-conducted debriefing session in the wake of each individual interview session.

Though the time-related field dilemma, which conspired to limit the extent of inductive change informing the interview process, was unintended, such a scenario is not without merit. In this regard, while acknowledging that the pure separation of data collection and analysis is impossible, Seidman (2006, p. 113) urges avoidance of any in-depth analysis of interview data while the collection phase is still in progress. Even though possibly salient topics are identified in early interviews, not undertaking an analysis of interview transcripts until the interview process is completed, avoids imposing meaning from one participant's interviews on the next, and minimises imposing on the generative process of the interviews what has been learned from other participants. In my study, inadvertent adherence to Seidman's (2006) advice on the separation of data collection and data analysis, though unintentional, succeeded in making a virtue of necessity.

3.8 Hierarchy of questions

Hierarchically, arranging questions at three levels proves useful in organising a research undertaking (Punch 2009, p. 58). The three levels, in descending order, refer, respectively, to general research questions, specific research questions, and data collection questions (Table 3E). The three levels are understood to form a hierarchy because they vary systematically in levels of abstraction and generality. Accordingly, the top level (i.e. general research questions) is the most general and abstract. The bottom level (i.e. data collection questions) is the most specific and concrete. Other hierarchical arrangements of interview questions are also found in the literature. Creswell (2009), for instance, outlines a hierarchy composed of central questions, sub questions and specific questions. As with Punch's (2009) hierarchy, each level, in ascending order, represents a progressive refinement in terms of abstraction and generality. A benefit of organising research questions according to a three-level hierarchy lies in the foregrounding of links between corresponding levels of abstraction. While unfolding or inductively-orientated research studies prove problematic to organise hierarchically (Punch 2009, p. 76), the predominantly deductive nature of my study ensures that conceiving of research questions in terms of a three-level hierarchy, proves possible to transact. Therefore, in my study, utilising Punch's (2009) hierarchy helps disentangle the many questions that consideration of the shaping of beginning teacher identity produces. Additionally, tight logical links between all three levels enhances the quality of research, particularly in respect of a number of qualitative criteria: credibility, transferability, consistency and coherence.

Table 3E: Hierarchy of questions

Question level	**Purpose**	
General research question	Overarching research question: - guides researcher's thinking - of significant organisational value.	Each level, in ascending order, represents a progressive refinement in terms of abstraction and generality. 
Specific research questions	Constitute the theoretically informed interview domains, which frame three, individual semi-structured interviews.	
Data collection questions	Questions asked directly of participants, via interview schedule.	

3.8.1 General research question

Not directly answerable due to its inherent generality and abstraction, a general research question guides the researcher's thinking and is of significant organisational value. Due to the progressive refinement of the guiding conceptual framework, the wording of the general research question has continued to evolve throughout the course of my study. The focus of my enquiry is encapsulated in the following general research question:

> *Drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives, what aspects of the contextual, emotional, and temporo-spatial dimensions of early-career experience prove revealing with respect to the shaping of beginning teacher identity?*

Research questions are rarely truly novel and frequently originate from other researchers operating within an existing community of practice. With respect to my general research question, the dimensions deemed significant to the shaping of beginning identities represent an adaptation of the work of McNally et al. (2010).

3.8.2 Specific research questions

A general research question requires subdivision - or unpacking - into several specific research questions. In this way, the inherent generality of the general research question is defined downwards towards its data indicators.

In my study, specific research questions constitute the theoretically informed interview domains, framing the three one-to-one semi-structured interview schedules, conducted with nine participating beginning teachers, at three points throughout their first year of occupational experience (Appendix 2; Appendix 3; Appendix 4). Determining the layout of the principal empirical procedure adhered to in my study, an overview of the specific research questions or interview domains addressed in each of the three interview schedules, is provided in Table 3F.

More detailed and concrete than general research questions, specific research questions are directly answerable because they point directly at the data needed to answer them. In this manner, the general research question is answered indirectly by accumulating and integrating the answers to the corresponding specific research questions.

Table 3F: Overview of specific research questions / interview domains

Interview Schedule section	Interview domains: Interview 1 November 2010 [Appendix 2]	Interview domains: Interview 2 March 2011 [Appendix 3]	Interview domains: Interview 3 June 2011 [Appendix 4]
1	Background: Biographical & Academic Motivation(s)	"Grand tour" questions: - - "breakthrough moments" & "bumpy moments" in forging identity Work/life balance	Preparation / ITE / TP Beginning teacher / School - Community interaction [Colleagues incl. NQT's / Principal / Pupils / Parents / Mentoring / Induction / Probation] Professional culture
2	Workplace learning: - goals - purposes - motives - consequences	Beginning teacher / School community interaction: - Induction / Mentoring process: Role of Principal + colleagues + other NQT's - Parents - Pupils	Relational / Emotional dimension of beginning teaching Cultural / Structural / factors vs. Interior / Biographical / Personal factors
3	Resources / Materials: - Conceptual - Practical / Material	Organisational issues: - degree and nature of collaborative practices - professional culture(s) - SNA's	Identity formation: - Relational / Emotional / personal vs. Professional / Cultural Archetypes [Social vs. Individual dimensions of identity formation] Complexity of teaching / Competence [Practical & Conceptual]
4	SWOT Analysis [data not utilised]	Resources / materials / assessment procedures	Central teaching tasks Agency / Conformity Pedagogical beliefs
5	Likert style questionnaire [data not utilised] Summing up	Expectation of beginning teacher Deficient or possessing expertise / sharing expertise Accountability: - Planning criteria / documentation - Planning resources / materials Probationary process Summing up	Beginners' anticipated and remembered story lines - visual representation (Conway 2001; Conway & Clark 2003). - High points - Low points - Turning points - Hopes / Aspirations - Fears / Concerns Summing up

3.8.3 Data collection questions

At the lowest level of the hierarchy (Punch 2009, p. 58), at the most specific level, are data collection questions. These are questions that are asked directly of the participants, usually via interview or questionnaire, with a view to collecting data to help answer research questions, both general and specific. In my study, very many data collection questions, across three semi-structured interview schedules, are involved in assembling the data necessary to answer one general research question (Appendix 2; Appendix 3; Appendix 4).

3.9 Ethical protocol

> Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict (Stake 2005, p.459).

Ethics is how we behave in relation to the people with whom we interact (Simons 2009, p. 96). In conducting research, it is necessary to devise an ethical protocol composed of sets of procedures to guide researchers' actions in the field, principally with respect to data collection and dissemination. The principal motivations for so doing are ensuring, to the maximum extent possible, the protection of the rights of research participants, and the minimisation of potential unintended or unexpected consequences. By comparison, issues which receive less attention include the ethical rights *of* and/or danger *for* the researcher (Simons 2005, p. 56) and wider, macro-ethical social consequences of research (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 312).

Along with much qualitative work case study research "shares an intense interest in personal views and circumstances" (Stake 2005, p. 459). As a result, research

participants are rendered vulnerable and need reassurance that they will receive considerate treatment at all stages of a research undertaking and that if difficulties arise, these can be discussed and resolved, meeting both participants' concerns and researchers' obligations to produce public knowledge. Ethics in research is, therefore, an integral component of the research planning and implementation process, and is not to be viewed as an afterthought or a burden (Mertens 2005, p. 33; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 62).

Professional associations have published guidelines that offer guidance for ethical decision-making and, accordingly, facilitate ethical practice e.g. American Educational Research Association (AERA) 2011; British Educational Research Association (BERA) 2011; Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA) 2005. The principles enshrined in these guidelines, while useful in providing a shared frame of reference and in guiding ethical decision-making, are, however, abstract statements of intent and cannot be adhered to simply in rule-like fashion. Instead, ethical practice depends on how principles are interpreted and enacted in the precise context of the research; with ethical practice, each research situation has to be considered in its own right. The development of ethical protocols is, therefore, a situated practice, and, accordingly, ethical decision-making needs to take cognisance of the uniqueness and complexity of each situation (Simons 2009, p. 96; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 61). Situated ethical decision-making is also more likely to result in ethical protocols that are relational and participatory i.e. protocols that are more democratic and that seek to "acknowledge an intention to research *with* people rather than avoid doing harm *to* them" (Simons 2009, p. 97). The present inquiry is guided by the values inherent in situated ethical decision-making.

In the following sub-sections, the main fields demanding ethical behaviour on my part, as researcher, are discussed. These relate to informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and transparency. Complexities that continue to arise throughout the course of my study, a function of the dilemmatic nature of behaving ethically, are also addressed.

3.9.1 Informed consent

Informed consent means the knowing consent of individuals to participate, as an exercise of their choice, in a research undertaking. Accordingly, participants were facilitated to make an informed decision regarding their participation in my study. This entailed informing the participants about the main features and procedures of the design, the overall purpose of the investigation, that participation in the research was completely voluntary, as well as any possible consequences, both risks and benefits, from participation in the research project. Particular attention was drawn to the voluntary, non-coercive nature of the undertaking. Therefore, informants were made aware of their right to withdraw at any time during the course of the project, end an interview at any time or choose not to answer specific questions. Information pertaining to confidentiality and access to the research data, the researcher's right to publish data, and the participant's possible access to collected data, interview transcriptions, for instance, was also made available to participants (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, pp. 70-71).

In most institutionally sponsored research, consent must be obtained in writing. Accordingly, in the case of my study, all participants, and researcher, co-signed and

dated individual informed consent forms. An information sheet, which accompanied each form, outlined the nature of the research, the procedures in which participants could expect to participate, a description of the means by which confidentiality was protected, and my contact details, thus facilitating immediate communication in relation to any aspect of the undertaking (Appendix 13). Securing signed informed consent forms from participants means that a formal record of those who participated in my study exists. In order to preserve privacy, the storage of these forms is an issue that receives careful attention.

The publication of a research report raises ethical questions with regard to the potential effects publication has on contributing participants. Therefore, a sound ethical principle is to seek clearance from the individuals concerned for use of the data in a specific context or report. Care should be taken before data collection commences to have a clear understanding with participants about the later use and possible publication of their data, preferably with a written agreement (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 272). Accordingly, in my study, this agreement formed part of the consent form signed by each participant (Appendix 13).

Achieving informed consent, however, is not a straightforward process. Firstly, there is often a tension between 'fully' informing and the facilitation of participation, as outlining all the potential consequences may limit participation. Secondly, it may not always be possible to foresee the consequences in advance and, therefore, difficult for a researcher to anticipate the potential ethical (and political) consequences of research (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 273). Thus, engagement with the concept of "rolling informed consent" (Simons 2005, p. 56; Simons 2009, p. 103; Punch 2009, p. 51)

constitutes a more enlightened approach to research practice. This involves the on-going renegotiation of informed consent throughout the course of a research project, when a more realistic, real-time assessment of the impact of the undertaking on participants can be made. With respect to my study, informed consent was an on-going process. It was not a one-off event, but was continuously renegotiated. The right to withdraw, or not to participate in some parts of the research, was fully respected. In transacting these issues, I engaged in ongoing consultation with all nine reserach participants and with my research supervisor, Dr Paul Conway.

Implied consent is usually indicated by a participant taking the time to complete a lengthy questionnaire. A similar kind of implied consent can replace a signed consent form when a researcher conducts digitally recorded in-depth interviews with a participant. In this instance, the researcher can verbally brief the participant with regard to those issues commmonly addressed in a written consent form. Affirmative responses on the part of the participant forms part of the recording and serves as a form of implied consent in the absence of a signed consent form. The benefit of this type of informed consent is the elimination of any record of the participants' names (Berg 2009). Despite digitally recording all interview sessions, acquiring implied consent in this manner, did not form part of my study.

3.9.2 Confidentiality

While Boards of Management and school principals are the 'gatekeepers' to those schools in which the beginning teacher research participants worked, preserving the confidentiality of participats precluded all contact with either 'gatekeeper'. In

addition, the fact that those schools were not visited during the data collection phase of the undertaking, justifies this course of action.

Ethical dilemmas notwithstanding, confidentiality in research also implies that private data identifying the participants will not be disclosed. Confidentiality is an active attempt to remove from the records any elements that might indicate the participants' identities (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 72; Mertens 2010, p. 342). Additionally, confidentiality is a principle that allows participants not only to talk in confidence, but also to refuse to allow publication of any material that they think might impact negatively on them in any way. Therefore, data obtained in confidence can subsequently be checked with research participants for public release. It means acknowledging that not all information obtained in interview becomes public (Simons 2009, p. 106). In this respect, I engaged in a debriefing practice called 'member checking'. It involved all interviewees being supplied with transcripts of their three individual interviews and afforded the opportunity of checking if the transcripts accurately reflected their interviews. Each interviewee was informed of their right to amend the transcript if they were of the opinion that they were misrepresented by providing further written elaborations, following reflection, on what was said during the interview (Brenner 2006, p. 368). Participants, however, do not have a say in how their agreed statements are subsequently interpreted.

To offset the possibility of participants being surprised, even shocked, as a consequence of reading their own words in print, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 187) advise that researchers consider accompaning interview transcripts with information about the natural differences between oral and written language styles. While this option was not availed of in my study, with the benefit of hindsight, I realise that

having done so would have helped in socialising participants vis-à-vis research processes. As it transpired, the 'member checking' process caused a number of participants to express some surprise on viewing their interview transcripts. In this respect, responses varied from alarm at the degree of 'frankness' expressed to dismissiveness for having spoken 'nonsense'. Scenarios of this kind are instructive in that they remind researchers to remain sensitive to how participants understand research undertakings generally, and interviewing processes in particular.

3.9.3 Anonymity

Anonymity means that no uniquely identifying information is attached to collected data. Thus, no one can easily trace the data back to the individual from whom the data is sourced (Mertens 2010, p. 342). For instance, in disseminating research results, pseudonyms and aliases are used for personal names and school names, respectively. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, pp. 272-273) stress that, while this requires altering the form of the information, it should not have the effect of making major changes in meaning. While anonymisation is a procedure that offers protection of privacy, because, to varying extents, those participating in my study are known to me, anonymity, in the literal sense, is nonexistent. Therefore, to maximise the level of anonymity extended to participants, research-related information is not carelessly discussed. Accordingly, I exercise caution about how participants or their work settings are discussed. An issue deserving particular attention in the context of the Irish education system, detailed 'local knowledge' in the possession of practioners, a function of the relatively small size of the teaching profession in the country, renders anonymity in research as centrally important.

3.9.4 Transparency

Throughout the course of my doctoral research, I have engaged in ongoing consultation with my research supervisor, Dr Paul Conway, School of Education, University College Cork. Additionally, my doctoral study is guided by the detailed ethical standards governing research undertaken at University College Cork. The relevant link is: www.ucc.ie/research/rio/ethics.html

At University College Cork, the committee tasked with ensuring that researchers have considered the ethical issues that are likely to arise in respect of non-clinical research involving human participants are the Social Research Ethics Committee (SREC). The SREC have developed a set of ethical procedures to protect participants, and to guide data collection and dissemination.

Receipt of ethical approval to proceed with my doctoral study necessitated my submitting to SREC a completed Ethics Approval Form and a completed Informed Consent Form Template. The relevant links for sourcing these documents are:

Ethics Approval Form:

www.ucc.ie/research/rio/documents/ApplicationForm_000.doc

Informed Consent Form Template:

www.ucc.ie/research/rio/documents/InformedConsentFormTemplate.doc

When preparing my original submission for ethical approval, in November 2010, it proved difficult to envisage all the ethical dilemmas that, potentially, could arise throughout the course of my study (Appendix 9; Appendix 10). In their response to my original submission, in December 2010, the SREC, while acknowledging that I had provided ethically appropriate answers and had addressed all the reference points

for acting ethically in the field, nonetheless, sought further information (Appendix 11). Specifically, the SREC requested detailed information on how I intended to fulfil a range of ethical commitments, extended to prospective participants. Resubmission of a revised Ethics Approval Form (Appendix 12), and a revised Informed Consent Form (Appendix 13), in January 2011, addressed these issues comprehensively. Finally, in February 2011, I was granted ethical approval by SREC to proceed with my doctoral study (Appendix 14). In sum, while the process of securing ethical approval was somewhat protracted, and belated, it had the effect of sensitising me to the importance of maintaining the highest possible ethical standards at all stages of my research undertaking.

3.9.5 Ethical dilemmas: Ongoing and complex

The ongoing nature of a range of complex, context-specific, ethical issues characterise research processes. Therefore, devising an ethical protocol, while helpful, does not necessarily resolve all ethically related issues (Bassey 1999, p. 79).

Rather than viewing ethical concerns as amenable to a quick fix before a research undertaking commences, the issue, instead, should be conceptualised in terms of uncertainties that demand to be continually addressed and reflected upon for the entire duration of an inquiry, even afterwards. Ethical guidelines must always be understood contextually and should be reconfigured pragmatically as tools to think with in times of uncertainty, rather than being seen as the final moral authority that ignores real-life ambiguities and uncertainties. Rather than "solving" ethical issues at the outset of an undertaking, it is more important that researchers remain cognisant of the dilemmas, ambivalences, and conflicts that are bound to arise throughout the research process

(Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, pp. 69-70). As with the related concept of situated ethical decision-making, this demands going beyond ethical guidelines and principles and focusing more on the ethical capabilities of researchers.

The ongoing, complex and dilemmatic nature of conducting ethically informed research, necessitates the development of ethical reflexivity between the participants and the researcher, through a process of honest, open deliberation of the issues and possible consequences of the undertaking, so that the outcome is morally and ethically defensible to all. Morally responsible research behaviour, however, is more than abstract ethical knowledge; it involves the moral integrity of the researcher, his or her sensitivity and commitment to moral issues and action (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p.74). Therefore, as a researcher, I pay particular attention to adopting a disciplined self-reflexive approach to my own research behaviour.

A number of ethical issues continued to cause ongoing concern during the course of my study. In turn, these issues relate to uncertainties surrounding the degree of disclosure necessary with regard to certain aspects of the study; decoupling confidentiality and anonymity; asking sensitive questions in an ethically defensible way during interview sessions; the ethical storage and destruction of data; and, avoiding prejudicial reporting while practicing the necessary art of selectivity. Typically presenting in dilemmatic form, dealing with these issues demanded negotiated trade-offs, rather than the application of rules (Miles and Huberman 1994; Simons 2009). In turn, the manner in which these dilemmas were negotiated is now outlined.

3.9.5.1 Uncertainties surrounding degrees of disclosure

An uncertainty or dilemma relating to the issue of informed consent concerned a conflict between providing a complete disclosure of the rationale of the research project beforehand and withholding some information from the participants (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 72). Providing information about a study involves a careful balance between giving too much detailed information and leaving out aspects of the design that may be significant to the participants. The issue is particularly problematic in the context of unfolding or emergent designs and a resolution resides in the form of rolling informed consent provided on a verbal basis (Simons 2005, 2009). In this regard, I questioned if I should explicitly acknowledge the theoretical framework framing the undertaking. I decided against sharing this information with participants on the basis that, unbeknownst to participants, the invocation of an authoritative voice, on the part of a researcher, does not equate to disrespect for the voices of those participants (Chase 2005, pp. 664-666).

3.9.5.2 Decoupling confidentiality and anonymity

An issue, which results in confused thinking about aspects relating to the ethics of research, is a failure to differentiate between confidentiality and anonymity.

Confidentiality and anonymity need to be decoupled and considered separately, as they have quite distinct meanings (Simons 2009, p. 106). While anonymisation may protect the privacy of individuals to a degree when the research is published, it is not the same as honouring confidentiality in the research process. It is not a trade-off and it is certainly no guarantee to say we will interview you in confidence and anonymise you in reports, as though one takes care of the other. Yet, that is precisely how the concepts of confidentiality and anonymity are conceived of in many research

undertakings. As a result, broken promises of confidentiality and anonymity in research projects and imprecision about what is meant by both terms can result in serious misunderstandings between researchers and participants (Bell 2005, p. 48). In my study, confidentiality and anonymity are considered as constituting distinct ethical assurances to participants. Of additional interest, a dilemma pertaining to both confidentiality and anonymity presented at the conclusion of the data collection phase of my study. It related to a participant who expressed a wish to include their participation in my study as part of their Curriculum Vitae, thus, potentially, compromising confidentiality and anonymity. I allowed the participant to retain ownership of their voice and exert their independence in making the decision. The participant, however, was well briefed about the possible risks of non-confidentiality and non-anonymity, for example, the inclusion of unexpected data and claims in the final report and other dissemination formats.

3.9.5.3 Ethically defensible sensitive questioning

In relation to interviewing, a principal data collection method employed in my study, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 73) council that researchers should at all times anticipate the potential for their acting in ethically transgressive ways, and to remain cognisant of how a sensitive interview interaction may be stressful for participants. Having developed a relationship of trust over time, participants often speak quite openly about their experiences, and may inadvertently reveal something they did not intend. Interviewers should ensure that they do not unintentionally misuse this information and exploit a participant's openness or vulnerability. How critically an interviewee might be questioned, with a view to obtaining penetrating knowledge, must be ethically defensible (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 174). How to ask

participants sensitive questions is a field dilemma faced by many researchers. Similarly, the dilemma of wanting as much knowledge as possible, while at the same time respecting the integrity of the interview subject, was not easily solved during the course of the present undertaking.

3.9.5.4 Ethical data storage and destruction

Data, once analysed, needs to be kept for a reasonable period of time. Storage arrangements have to be sufficiently secure to prevent the misappropriation of data. Arrangements surrounding the destruction of data also need to be ethically informed. In relation to organising data sets at the conclusion of a case study, Bassey (1999, pp. 79-80) distinguishes between archive, case record and case report. The archive is the complete set of documents involved in the inquiry. The case record is the set of documents approved by research participants, through the process of member checking, for public access. They are a subset of the archive and are the researcher's source for writing the case report. The case report is written with an audience in mind; indeed, several case reports can be authored with different audiences in mind or focused on different aspects of the study e.g. doctoral thesis, journal article, conference paper. Thinking about data systematically in this way helps to ensure that, in relation to data storage, ethical principles prevail.

Ensuring the confidentiality of personal responses is of particular importance in relation to the archive arising from my study, as the digital audio recording of interviews makes it easy to identify individual research participants. Therefore, a particular ethical importance attaches to the need for secure storage of digital recordings, and to arrangements surrounding the erasure of the recordings when they are no longer of use (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, pp. 186-187).

3.9.5.5 Being selective but not prejudicial in reporting

In relation to authoring a research report, ongoing ethical dilemmas are also present. Researchers are under an ethical responsibility to report research as fairly and as completely as possible. Therefore, avoiding the selective use of data that suits a particular purpose is of fundamental importance (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 272). Yet, here too, a dilemma is present. In much interpretivist inquiry it is normal practice, and quite appropriate, to selectively use data to clearly communicate the categories and ideas that have been developed through the analysis - assuming that all data collected has been carefully considered whilst the model is being developed. The key question is the extent to which the data is selected in terms of the emerging models rather than in terms of the researcher's pre-existing expectations and prejudices. Additionally, it is incumbent upon the researcher to provide sufficient details of methodology and context to ensure readers can make judgenments about the quality of the research, and of its relevance to other contexts, and highlight recognised limitations in the study (Taber 2007, pp. 136-137).

3.10 Piloting process

Pilot testing is especially important, as insights gleaned at pilot study stage affect all remaining stages of a research undertaking. Specifically, pilot testing helps to develop not only the data collection instruments but also the guiding conceptual framework.

Therefore, during the course of the 2009/2010 school year, two data collection instruments, intended for use in my study, namely, interview schedule and digital diary/e-mail log, were piloted with two volunteer beginning teachers. Piloting a draft version of the first of the three interview schedules enabled me to become comfortable with the question schedule and ascertain whether the planned questions

were appropriate for the targeted interviewees (Brenner 2006, p. 366). Additionally, piloting the e-mail based digital diary, data collection instrument, proved equally invaluable, particularly in relation to clarifying a number of logistical and technical issues. The same ethical considerations that applied to the research undertaking proper, applied to the pilot phase of the study. Specifically, as data collected during the pilot phase could, potentially, be used in the final research report, written permission was secured to this effect from the two beginning teacher volunteers.

3.11 Research locations

The setting for my study refers to those locations where the principal instruments of data collection, a series of three individual semi-structured interviews, were conducted. (In a broader sense where participants chose to contribute to their e-mail logs can, similarly, be considered to constitute research locations). Six of the nine participants were individually interviewed, on three separate occasions, in my workplace office. The other three participants were similarly interviewed in the researcher's home. The three participants who were interviewed in the researcher's home were offered the choice of conducting the interviews in either the researcher's workplace office or in the researcher's home. They chose the latter, they explained, for no reason other than ease of parking! The six participants who were interviewed in the researcher's workplace office were not offered an alternative venue. The reason why I differentiated between participants in this way was due to the fact that those participants who were offered a choice of interview venue live in suburbs that are adjacent to the interviewer's home and, therefore, are familiar with the geographic layout of the area.

In arranging interview locations, as in all other aspects of the undertaking, I remained sensitive to ethical issues arising from the asymmetrical power relation between researcher and participant. Researchers, though not always, are usually positioned on the relatively more powerful side (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 63 and p. 76) and choice of interview location can bring this imbalance very much to the fore. With the potential impact of this imbalance in mind, each participant was quickly put at ease during the initial interview session. As a result, all subsequent interview sessions proceeded very smoothly.

3.12 Interviewing: Enhancing the collection of rich data

Interviewing entails negotiating questions with interviewees. An important aspect of this process involves decreasing the power differential between the interviewee and the interviewer by for instance, interacting casually with interviewees and using nonformal terminology (Mertens 2010, p. 371; Brenner 2006, p. 365). However, I remained mindful that high levels of social involvement may result in bias. Additionally, it is important to choose questions that are meaningful to an interviewee and to draw from what they know from within their frame of reference. Ambiguity in questions is a major source of error, as is lack of agreement over the meanings of the terms being used. Therefore, I ensured that interviewees' cultural and personal vocabularies and frameworks were incorporated into the questions (Akkerman and Meijer 2011, p. 316). Interview questionnaires were, therefore, grounded in the language of the research participants. This was especially important in a research undertaking framed conceptually by sociocultural theories, activity theory, figured worlds theory, and dialogical self theory. I shaped the questions in a manner that

elicited the reality of life as constructed and experienced by the beginning teacher respondents rather than imposed by me, the interviewer.

To enhance the collection of rich data from the interview process, I began each session by asking questions that encouraged the informants to talk expansively on the interview topics. Thus, I began with "large" questions - "grand tour" questions (Brenner 2006, p. 362) i.e. broad descriptive questions that were close to the informant's current experience and expertise. These questions are non-threatning in nature and do not challenge the respondents conception of themselves as expert. As short questions can suggest that short responses are expected, I posed long questions to mark the special nature of the interview situation – it encouraged the interviewee to open up and expand in a way that is distinctive from normal conversation, where balanced turn taking is, usually, common. Longer questions signal that the interviewer expects longer answers and will give the interviewee time to collect their thoughts. I provided enough information in each question so that the interviewee understood the question fully. In addition, I extended and clarified the interviewees' responses through probes and prompts, while always remaining aware that excessive prompting affects quality. The probes and prompts used were neutral; they were neither affirming nor critical. Probing of an evolving interview was used judiciously and spontaneously as needed in the context. Potential probes were included in the interview script to serve as a reminder to elicit in-depth information from each informant. When particularly effective follow-up probes emerged in the context of one interview, it was added to the list of potential probes for subsequent interviews (Brenner 2006, p. 364).

The interview schedule was carefully planned and developed. Questions were arranged in a logical order, from general to specific i.e. in a 'funnel shape' (Brenner 2006, p. 362). At the conclusion of each interview, I asked the interviewee if they wished to address any issue that they felt was not dealt with during the course of the interview. I requested permission from each interviewee to contact them via e-mail if I wished to clarify any issue arising from the interview. Additionally, I informed all interviewees that they were welcome to contact me via e-mail or mobile phone if they wished to add to or clarify any issue addressed during the course of the interview.

3.12.1 Interview recording

With the permission of research participants, each individual interview was audio recorded using an Olympus Digital Voice Recorder (VN - 3100 PC). The recorder possesses a high acoustic quality. On completion, the recordings were transferred directly to a desktop computer, located in the researcher's workplace office, for storage. Access to the stored audio files is password protected.

The audio recording of interviews not only facilitated a complete recording of the interviewee's actual words but also freed me to concentrate, in a natural way, on the topic and dynamics of the interview. As audio recordings preserve the actual natural language of interviews, the words, tones, pauses and inflections that make up the verbatim account of each interview, are recorded in a permanent form. Thus, repeat listening during the analysis phase was facilitated. Additionally, recording the interviewer's contribution to the interview facilitated reflection, not least in relation to the researcher's own interviewing style and technique.

A potential drawback of audio recording is that the presence of an audio recorder can be anxiety inducing for the interviewee. My experience during the course of the study is that interviewees, while initially fleetingly aware of the recorder, soon disregarded its presence. An additional disadvantage attaching to audio recording is the generation of extensive volumes of data. This runs the risk of core issues being masked by irrelevancies. In this respect, I acknowledge that, in the case of some interviewees, maintaining a focus on the question asked, and limiting the volume of anecdotes related, remained an ongoing challenge for the interviewer!

3.12.2 Post-interview field notes

Judicious notetaking during the course of an interview allows the interviewer to record details about the context, body language, and affect that might not be apparent on the audio record. It also allows the interviewer the opportunity to note directions that emerge in the interview that warrant future questions (Mertens 2010, p. 372). Additioanlly, some interviewees may expect the interviewer to engage in notetaking (Brenner 2006, p. 365). However, the disadvantages of making field notes during the course of an interview include the disruption it causes to the flow of the interview conversation and the distraction it causes for both interviewer and interviewee. For these reasons, I refrained from compiling field notes during the course of the interview sessions. Instead, notes were compiled after each interview in order to capture contextual features deemed important or because an interviewee raised a topic deemed suffuciently important to be pursued in future interviews. The writing of post-interview field notes was also a function of time constraints thus limiting the level of iterative data analysis originally planned, that is, data analysis undertaken between the three rounds of individual interviews. Instead, a form of theoretical sampling took

place, in the guise of my undertaking, as interviewer, a self-conducted debriefing session, after each individual interview session.

3.12.3 Interview transcription

In transcribing interviews, a global (verbatim) rather than a selective transcription approach was adopted. A one-person commercial transcription service was employed to transcribe all recorded interviews. The selected transcriber had previously completed similar transcription work for the School of Education, University College Cork. The successful completion of that work, was the principal criterion informing my selection of transcriber. Audio files were copied onto CD-ROM's and posted to the Dublin-based transcriber. The completed transcriptions were returned to me as e-mail attachments and the CD-ROM's were returned via post. All CD-ROM's were subsequently destroyed.

3.13 Analytic approach

In this undertaking, the analytic approach adopted can be considered to be theoretical (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 233; Yin 2009, pp. 130-131). This involves my undertaking a theoretical informed reading of interview transcripts, solicited digital diaries (e-mail logs) and drawing connections between the data and larger theoretical issues. The utilisation of *a priori* or predetermined theoretical constructs means that a deductive approach is principally employed in analysing data (Brenner 2006, p. 367; Thomas and James 2006, p.783). Concept-driven rather than data-driven (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 202), the deductive nature of the undertaking witnesses dimensionally-related themes being developed from the outset. Questions were framed using these constructs, and the analysis examines how informants addressed

these constructs (Brenner 2006, p. 360) during interviews and in the compilation of e-mail logs.

The presentation of the analyses chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6), is determined by the dimensional structure or composition of my multiple-case report. Hence, my transcript is sculpted around three dimensions of beginning teacher experience, namely, contextual; emotional; temporo-spatial. Additionally, key underlying assumptions in respect of data analysis were made at the initial stages of my study (Yin 2006, p.118). When defining specific research questions, which constitute the sociocultural and activity theoretical informed interview domains framing three semi-structured interview schedules (Appendices 2, 3, 4), I anticipated and planned analytic implications. As my study progressed, principles derived from dialogical self theory, and figured worlds theory, especially, assumed increasing conceptual importance. Therefore, a focus on data analysis is present at all stages of my study, as I gradually build an argument that addresses my hierarchy of general, specific and data collection questions. My analysis is tantamount to the analytic technique of *pattern-matching* (Yin 2006, p.118), whereby collected evidence is deductively matched against a theoretical or conceptual pattern which has progressively taken shape from the outset of the study. Operationally, a system based on the colour coding of interview, e-mail and story-line transcripts was devised, to select data deemed suitable for inclusion in the deductively framed analyses chapters. Repeated readings of the data set progressively refined the process of data selection, thus achieving the 'thick description' necessary to enhance the 'transferability' of study claims (Mertens 2010, p.310).

Employing a deductive approach helps to address a central limitation of research in the interpretive genre i.e. the lack of shared conceptual frameworks and designs. This limitation makes it a challenging task to aggregate claims and to draw comparisons across studies, even when those studies are of similar phenomena (Borko et al. 2007, p.5). However, claims arising from my study are set in the wider context of theoretically informed current themes and preoccupations relating to the shaping of emergent identities. In this manner the study claims will have relevance in different contexts and to other researchers (Brenner 2006, p. 367).

Researchers, though, are advised to remain mindful of a limitation attaching to a theoretical reading of data sources i.e. theoretical bias. This occurs when the researcher only notices those aspects of the data set that can be viewed through their chosen theoretical lens (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 238). In this respect, Yin (2009, p. 34 and pp. 133-134) stresses the importance of specifying important 'rival explanations' at the design stage of research undertakings. Therefore, to counteract the possibility of theoretical bias, I play devil's advocate with respect to theoretical informed understandings of the shaping of beginning teacher identity. Being aware from the outset of 'rival explanations' in relation to the shaping of emergent identities in the workplace, allows for the vigorous collection of evidence about possible other influences, as if one was "trying to prove the potency of the other influences rather than rejecting them" (Yin 2009, p. 134). As such, arriving at a reliable theoretical understanding of the shaping of beginning teachers' identities is a journey characterised by the inherent contestation of differing perspectives on the issue. An additional advantage, accruing from the inclusion of 'rival explanations', is that the

interviewer is more likely to be sensitive towards the many nuances of what interviewees are articulating. In short, the interviewer is more attuned to the 'whispered' components of an interview. Therefore, understandings that question the adequacy of elements of the chosen theoretical framework to address the inherent complexities of identity shaping, are incorporated into my study. These include sources that emphasise the significance of individual biography, disposition, and the affective domain. In securing evidence to bolster the claims of 'rival explanations' to chosen theoretical understandings of the shaping of emergent identity, data transcripts are replete with evidence of individualistic endeavour and personal resilience and inventiveness in the face of workplace cultures characterised by isolating work practices.

From the outset, principles derived from sociocultural theories (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998; Putnam and Borko 2000; Hodkinson et al. 2008; Rogoff 2003, 2008) and activity theory (Engeström 1987, 1999, 2001) informed the conceptual framing of my research undertaking. For instance, a detailed examination of the three, individual semi-structured interview schedules (Appendix 2; Appendix 3; Appendix 4), reveals that principles derived from sociocultural theories and activity theory, determine their layout and content. As my study progressed, however, the influence of additional theoretical perspectives assumed increasing prominence, namely, figured worlds theory (Holland et al. 1998) and dialogical self theory (Hermans 1996, 2012; Akkerman and Meijer 2011). At the analysis stage, particularly, these additional perspectives enhanced the theoretical reading of interview data and of data derived from other instruments i.e. solicited digital diaries (Appendix 5) and the story-line method (Appendix 6; Appendix 7; Appendix 8). As all these theoretical perspectives

derive from a common root, the cultural-historical tradition, in analysing data uncovered in the field (Chapters 4, 5 and 6), they are deployed synergistically as broad-based animating principles, rather than narrowly or exhaustively.

3.14 Researcher's role: Reflexivity

Adherence to the epistemological assumptions of the constructivist paradigm, and the use of qualitative data collection instruments, ensures an inescapable and necessary personal dimension to data collection. Accordingly, I was in well neigh continuous interaction with participants throughout the course of the 2010/2011 school-year, conducting the collection of all data via three rounds of individual interviews and the submission of e-mail logs. The resultant relationship between me, as researcher, and the research participants is aptly described as "the inquirer and inquired-into….interlocked in an interactive process" (Mertens 2010, p. 19). Furthermore, adherence to the assumptions of the constructivist paradigm also meant that I remained mindful throughout that "research is a product of the values of researchers and cannot be independent of them" (Mertens 2010, p. 16). Unlike a test or experiment, used in a quantitative study, in a qualitative study, the researcher is the instrument for collecting data (Borman et al. 2006, p. 130). While generally the researcher's integrity is critical to the quality of the research data, and to the soundness of ethical decision-making, in interviewing, for instance, the importance of the researcher's integrity is magnified because the interviewer is the main instrument for obtaining data.

Consequently, I remain aware at all stages of my own values, assumptions, beliefs, biases and closeness to the research topic, and monitor those as the study progresses

to determine their impact on the study's data and interpretations. Crucially, I also remain sensitive to the influence of my own profile - i.e. gender, age, professional status - on the shaping of knowledge (Carlsen 2005, p. 242-243; Connelly and Clandinin 2006, p. 480; Hatt 2007, p. 159; Mertens 2010, p. 252; Akkerman and Meijer 2011, p. 316). Ensuring that the research participants trust me to articulate their authentic views remains my abiding priority.

3.14.1 Researcher identity and authorial stance

As a consequence of research enterprises not being independent of the researcher, issues attaching to researcher identity and authorial stance always remain central to doctoral study. Moreover, it is important for doctoral researchers, Kamler and Thomson (2006, p. 68) advise, to understand that their text is a representation; a version of the truth that is the product of writerly choices, and that it is discursive. As such, the interpretative process facilitates the refashioning of representations, the remaking of choices and the probing of discourses. Consequently, researchers are encouraged to be reflexive about their analyses and research accounts (Elliott 2005, p. 152). Reflexivity, in turn, foregrounds issues pertaining to the identity and authorial stance of the researcher. In short, reflexivity spotlights the role of the researcher as narrator. Spotlighting the researcher as narrator foregrounds a range of complex issues about voice, representation and interpretive authority (Chase 2005, p. 657). Implicit, for example, in discussions of how a researcher listens to an interviewee's voice - both during the actual interview and at the interpretive stage - is the issue of the researcher's voice. In constructing and interpreting others' voices and realities, researchers develop their own voices.

A typology of three voices or narrative strategies, typically deployed by researchers as they attempt to represent and interpret the voices of research participants is advanced (Chase 2005, pp. 664-666). These three voices refer, respectively, to a researcher's authoritative, supportive, and interactive voices. Neither an exhaustive or rigid classification of every possible narrative strategy, the typology is to be understood, instead, as a flexible device for understanding the diversity in researchers' voices, the flexible nature of the typology allowing the researcher "to move back and forth among them" (p. 664). The manner in which each of the three researcher voices of Chase's (2005) typology are deployed in my study is now outlined.

3.14.1.1 Deploying an authoritative voice

As researcher, my authoritative voice is evident in the adoption of a deductive approach towards data analysis. Theoretical constructs are employed to "make sense" of the qualitative data supplied by nine beginning teacher research participants. By asserting an authoritative, interpretative voice on the basis that the researcher has a different, theoretically informed interest from the participants in the participants' stories, as researcher, I am vulnerable to the criticism of privileging "'the analyst's listening ear' at the narrator's expense" (Denzin 1997 cited in Chase 2005, p. 664). However, while the adoption of an authoritative, theoretically informed voice means that while the researcher speaks differently from the participating beginning teachers, it does not mean that the voices of the participants are disrespected in any way. Rather, the adoption of a theoretically informed, deductive approach to data analysis, seeks to make visible and audible taken-for-granted practices, processes, and structural and cultural features characteristic of the everyday realities experienced by the beginning teacher participants in their respective workplaces.

3.14.1.2 Deploying a supportive voice

Traditionally, beginning teachers have constituted a relatively marginalised and voiceless grouping within education systems. Presently, in an Irish context, it is arguable that a number of factors are acting synergistically to accentuate that marginalised status. These include the redeployment of a significant number of experienced teachers to fill newly-vacant teaching posts, within the context of a significant increase in the number of newly-graduating primary teachers. Both factors conspire to lessen the employment prospects of beginning teachers to a significant degree. In thrusting the voices of nine beginning teachers to the fore, albeit within the confines of a doctoral study, I manifest elements of a supportive voice. In this respect, the undertaking also reflects the principles of the transformative paradigm (Mertens 2010). While not idealising or angelicising participants' voices, the researcher's supportive voice is also evident in the degree of latitude extended to research participants to articulate their understanding of the everyday reality of being a beginning teacher.

3.14.1.3 Deploying an interactive voice

Finally, the researcher's interactive voice foregrounds the complex interaction or intersubjectivity between researchers' and participants' voices. The adoption of an interactive voice involves researchers examining their voices, interpretations, and personal experiences through the refracted medium of participants' voices. A researcher involved in a "telling" inquiry, where interviewees "tell" the interviewer of their experiences, needs to be positioned within the inquiry and to imagine himself or herself more as an insider than an outsider vis-à-vis the research participants' experiences and to further explore his or her experiences in relation to the

participants' experiences (Connelly and Clandinin 2006). In this respect, an interactive voice is evident in my study in the manner in which I reflect on my own beginning experiences as a newly-qualified primary teacher and on my experiences of being a work colleague of many beginning teachers, in three large primary schools, over almost three decades. In doing so, I render myself vulnerable in the text and "undermine the myth of the invisible omniscient author" (Chase 2005, p. 666). However, I refrain from adopting the advice of Connelly and Clandinin (2006) of turning interview sessions into conversations "in which inquirer and research participants reciprocally share experiences on topics determined by the inquirer" (p. 484). I also refrain from treating myself as a participant, manifested in the undertaking of a self-interview, paralleling my interviews with research participants (p. 484). Instead, while exhibiting elements of an interactive voice, principally due to my own workplace experiences, my study remains firmly focused on gleaning the perspectives of nine beginning teachers on their identity shaping workplace experiences.

3.15 Data collection experiences: Positivity and messiness

Operationally, my conducting the series of three one-to-one interviews, with each research participant, was an overwhelmingly positive experience. In being flexible with regard to the arrangement of interview appointments, in their willingness to travel to mutually agreed interview locations and in rigidly adhering to arranged interview times, all nine participants displayed admirable commitment to the research undertaking. Deserving of particular praise was the level of energy and commitment displayed by all participants during the interview process. A principal lesson learned from undertaking this series of interviews relates to the importance of building trust

between interviewer and interviewee. The degree, to which all participants relaxed, as the series of interviews progressed, was noticeable. This, in turn, impacted positively on the level of participant commitment, and on the quality and comprehensiveness of response to questions posed.

Ideally, in a three-cycle, multi-phase interview process, data analysis is envisaged as a cyclical, recursive process that begins during data collection (Brenner 2006, pp. 366-367; Borko et al., 2007, p. 5). Similarly, Borman et al. (2006, p. 133) draw attention to the iterative nature of data analysis in case-study research by highlighting that data initially collected serves to reorient the next wave of data gathering and analysis. When attempted in the field, however, such methodological evocations can sometimes prove somewhat aspirational. For instance, in my study, while the same core, theoretically informed questions were asked of all respondents, thus facilitating the process of making direct comparisons at the data analysis stage, interview questions also evolved over time, as the research undertaking progressed. As a result, interview schedules were adjusted based on the previous interview for each participating individual beginning teacher (Mertens 2010, p. 20). In reality, though, the degree of cyclical recursiveness, originally envisaged for the undertaking, was considerably curtailed, principally due to time-related constraints. As a result, Brenner's (2006, pp. 366-367) five-phase approach for developing a systematic analysis framework i.e. transcription, description, analysis, interpretation and display, is implemented more linearly than originally envisaged.

Other issues also contributed to the inherent messiness of data collection in the field.

Firstly, at the beginning of the data collection phase, two minor hitches occurred in relation to the composition of the research cohort. Shortly after the completion of the first interview, in November 2010, one research participant expressed the wish to withdraw from the study, citing personal reasons. I immediately acceded to this request and destroyed all data collected from that participant. An alternative participant was immediately recruited to the project from the original volunteer cohort.

A second, related issue contributing to the messiness of the fieldwork stage, concerns yet another participant who ceased communicating with me in the wake of the first interview session, also in November 2010. This participant ignored all subsequent efforts at communication, on my part, via e-mail and text message. This was interpreted by me as a wish, on the part of that particular beginning teacher, to withdraw from the research undertaking. By then it was December 2010 and I deemed it too late in the 2010/2011 school year to add a replacement participant. As a result, the research cohort is composed of nine beginning teachers, rather than ten, as originally planned. Ethically, I am of the opinion that data accruing from the one interview recorded with that particular participant should not be considered to constitute part of my data set.

A third form of messiness, characterising the data collection process, relates to a shortfall in the number of e-mails submitted by research participants. Each participant was requested to submit twelve e-mails, as per a mutually agreed schedule (Appendix 5). Despite repeated exhortations, on my part, a slight shortfall occurred in the number of e-mails submitted by each participant. Rather than submitting the twelve e-mails

agreed upon, on average participants submitted approximately nine e-mails each. However, the submission or, rather, non-submission of e-mails, displayed a certain pattern. The highest level of non-compliance occurred during the period April/May 2011. Interestingly, this period coincided with the probationary-related inspection of participants, in their respective workplaces, by members of the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills. The lower level of e-mail submission serves to highlight the high-stakes, anxiety inducing nature of the probationary process. Subsequently, in June 2011, issues relating to the non-submission of e-mails were addressed as part of the final interview with each participant.

3.16 Judging the quality of qualitative research

The quality of interpretive studies, Borko et al. (2007, p. 5) inform us, is judged using criteria such as credibility, transferability, confirmability and authenticity. These qualitative parallels to reliability and validity (Mertens 2005, pp. 253-263; Mertens 2010; pp. 256-265) inform the design and quality of my study.

3.16.1 Credibility

Credibility is the criterion in qualitative research that parallels internal validity in postpositivist research. In qualitative research the credibility test asks if there is a correspondence between the way respondents actually perceive the world and the way the researcher portrays their viewpoints (Mertens 2005, pp. 254-256 and p. 358; Mertens 2010, pp. 256-259 and p. 388). In my study, a number of research strategies are used to enhance credibility.

a) Prolonged and Persistent Engagement

In addition to each research participant being interviewed on three separate occasions, throughout the course of the 2010/2011 school year, each participant also submitted a digital diary reflection on their beginning experiences, every three weeks or so. As a result of this intensive level of data collection, themes were repeating instead of extending at the conclusion of the data collection phase of the study.

b) Negative Case Analysis

Not all data collected during the course of the undertaking dovetails neatly with the theoretically informed concepts guiding my research undertaking. However, negative, disconfirming evidence not only serves to strengthen research claims but also draws attention to the nuanced nature of the realities being researched. Ultimately, the fact that a "reasonable" volume of data "fits" the selected conceptual framework, furnishes confidence in the theoretical conceptualisations utilised to illuminate the shaping of emergent identity.

c) Member Checks

Whether transacted formally or informally, 'member checks' is the most important criterion in establishing credibility (Mertens 2010, p. 257). To verify with all participants the constructions that were developing as a result of data collection, I shared relevant interview transcripts with each interviewee to ensure that they felt accurately portrayed. Accordingly, each interviewee was afforded the opportunity of providing further elaborations following reflection on what was said during the

interview (Brenner 2006, p. 368). Affording participants the opportunity to elaborate, or even retract, enhances the credibility or 'internal validity' of research claims.

3.16.2 Transferability

Transferability is the qualitative parallel to external validity in postpositivist research. External validity refers to the extent to which one can generalise the results of a research undertaking to other locations. In qualitative research, the burden of transferability is on the reader to determine the degree of similarity between a study site and another context. The researcher's responsibility is to provide sufficient detail to enable the reader to make such a judgement. Extensive and careful description of factors in a given context or contexts is known as "thick description" (Mertens 2010, p. 259). In my study, my task is to provide sufficient "thick description" in relation to the nine cases studied, thus enabling potential readers to understand the contextual variables operating both within and across settings. The reader is assumed to be able to 'transfer' subjectively from the cases in question to their own knowledge and experience. In case study research, the use of multiple cases, as in my study, is understood to strengthen the transferability of claims.

3.16.3 Confirmability

Confirmability is the qualitative parallel to the postpositivist notion of objectivity. In postpositivist studies, objectivity is enhanced as the influence of the researcher's judgement is minimised. In qualitatively orientated, constructivist studies, confirmability means that the data and their interpretation are not figments of the researcher's imagination (Mertens 2010, p. 260). Therefore, in my study, data can be

traced to original sources and the process of analysing data to establish claims is comprehensively detailed in the thesis account.

3.16.4 Authenticity

Authenticity refers to the presentation of a balanced view of all perspectives, values and beliefs. In short, authenticity is a measure of fairness in the presentation of views (Mertens 2005, p. 257). A number of criteria are outlined by Guba & Lincoln (2005, p. 207) as important in determining the authenticity of investigations conducted within the constructivist paradigm. The manner, in which each of these values informed how my study was transacted, is outlined.

a) Fairness

Different constructions and their underlying value structures are solicited and honoured. Conflicts and value differences are displayed. A variety of viewpoints are included in the research report (Mertens 2010, p. 260). The principle of fairness was adhered to at all stages of the present undertaking.

b) Ontological Authenticity

Ontological authenticity refers to the degree to which an individual's or group's conscious experience of the world becomes more informed or sophisticated. This can be determined based on member checks with respondents or by means of an audit trail that documents changes in individuals' constructions throughout the process (Mertens 2010, pp. 260-261). Specifically, due to conceiving of identity shaping in temporo-spatial terms, the concept of ontological authenticity lies at the heart of my study. My researching the evolving shaping of beginners' identities over the course of a school

year, links inextricably with the notion of a beginning teacher's conscious experience of the world becoming more informed and sophisticated.

c) Catalytic Authenticity

Catalytic authenticity is the extent to which action is stimulated by the inquiry process. Techniques for determining this criterion include examination of actions reported in follow-up studies (Mertens 2010, p. 261). Therefore, having completed my study, I intend to disseminate study claims by authoring and submitting articles to a number of peer reviewed journals. My primary motivation is to enhance understandings of the beginning teacher career phase, particularly in relation to issues arising from the context-specific nature of the study, among interested parties. These include, among others, policy makers, teacher educators, Teaching Council and NIPT personnel, members of the Inspectorate, student teachers, beginning teachers, experienced teachers and school principals. All of these parties, in various ways, are in a position to influence the early learning of beginning teachers. Not least, in this regard, are student teachers and beginning teachers, for whom the study is particularly relevant.

3.17 Triangulation

Frequently, in research projects, data is collected from different sources utilising a range of different data collection methods. In postpositivist terms, triangulation involves checking information for consistency of evidence across sources of data or methods of data collection. However, in the current undertaking, an insistence on consistency across sources (i.e. individual participants) contradicts the constructivist

notion of multiple realities (Mertens 2010, pp. 258-259). Moreover, consistency across methods (i.e. interview and digital diary) is examined only at the level of the individual participant, not across participants. Triangulation, therefore, is not used to smoothen or gloss over legitimate differences in interpretations of data (Mertens 2010, p. 429). Yet, while remaining cognisant of the constructivist notion of diversity and the uniqueness of each case, the analysis stage of my study is essentially a process of looking for relations in the data. Therefore, while it may appear contradictory, in light of what has been stated with regard to triangulating constructively-derived, qualitative data, nonetheless, at the analysis stage of my study, I seek to deductively identify "larger themes that tie together the particulars of individual experience" (Brenner 2006, p. 367).

3.18 Study limitations

Not unlike other research undertakings of its kind, limitations are an inherent part of all aspects of my study. In the following sub-sections, I outline a number of these shortcomings, which readers of this account should be appraised of in the interests of transparency.

3.18.1 Limitations arising from the composition of the study sample

Feasibility and manageability determine that the study cohort of nine beginning teachers is assembled via the 'snowball' sampling method. Therefore, the research endeavour is susceptible to a main limitation of that sampling method i.e. bias. The selected sampling method also draws attention to the fact that the research inquiry is restricted, in the main, to school settings within a relatively confined geographic area.

A further limitation attaching to a convenience sample of this kind is that one cannot generalise the results beyond the given population pool (Mertens 2010, p. 325). However, choosing maximum variation cases (Flyvbjerg 2006) helps offset these limitations, thus making it possible to generalise from the study claims to inform conceptualisations of the shaping of early-career identity generally and the shaping of beginning teacher identity, in particular.

3.18.2 Limitations attaching to the interpretive research genre

Employing a deductively-oriented approach helps to address a central limitation of research in the interpretive genre i.e. the lack of shared conceptual frameworks and designs. This limitation makes it a challenging task to aggregate claims and to draw comparisons across studies, even when those studies are of similar phenomena (Borko et al. 2007, p. 5). Additionally, though I confine the focus of my study to beginning primary school teachers, I remain mindful that a limitation attaching to the body of education-related interpretive research that has accrued is that it focuses primarily on school-based personnel to the exclusion of other parties to the provision of education (Borko et al. 2007, p. 5).

3.18.3 Limitations attaching to selected data collection instruments

The advantages accruing to my enquiry from the utilisation, as principal data collection methods, of semi-structured interview and digital diary writing, are outlined elsewhere in this chapter. This section outlines some disadvantages attaching to their use.

a) One-to-one, semistructured interview

Despite being a source of important data, interviews, particularly of the semi-structured variety, possess a number of limitations. These include a propensity for being highly subjective, prone to bias, problematic to compare and analyse, subject to unreliability, time demanding, and the wording of interview questions is as challenging in the case of interviews as it is for questionnaires (Oppenheim 1992; Kumar 1999; Robson 2002; Bell 2005; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009; Yin 2009, p. 102; Mertens 2010, p. 352). While none of these limitations are, of themselves, sufficiently debilitating to discredit my enquiry, nonetheless I am obliged to be aware of their collective effect on the overall quality of the undertaking.

b) Solicited digital diaries

Aside from some obvious limitations attaching to diary writing, not least the nearly always problematic issue surrounding the commitment of participants to maintaining a diary and issues relating to the quality of digital diary material derived, other limitations also attach to diary writing. Firstly, the self-completion nature of the exercise means that the researcher cannot ascertain the authenticity of the account provided in the diary. Secondly, maintaining the diary is a considerable imposition on the beginning teacher research participants at a time in their professional lives when they are under considerable pressure i.e. their probationary year. Consequently, research participants faltered somewhat in maintaining their diary, particularly during the period of probationary-related inspection visitations to their respective workplaces i.e. April/May 2011. Thus, it is arguable that, in relation to maintaining a digital diary account, participants produced a somewhat truncated account of their experiences.

3.19 Conclusion

In this chapter, I detailed the methodological elements of my study. Accordingly, a comprehensive account of issues pertaining to the selection of participants, and the collection and analysis of data, was furnished. In accounting for the inherent difficulties, tensions and frustrations of research, I justified contingencies adopted. Furthermore, as high quality research rests upon the craftsmanship of researchers, demanding mastery of methodological techniques to encompass knowledge of the research topic, sensitivity to the social relation of researcher and participant, and an awareness of epistemological, ontological and ethical aspects of research, my account takes cognizance of the emotional and ethical dimensions of research and acknowledges the necessity for reflexivity on my part, as researcher.

The next three chapters are devoted to the analysis of data derived from the nine beginning teachers who participated in my study. Respectively, in Chapter 4, Chapter 5, and Chapter 6, data analysis is organised as per the dimensional framework outlined in Chapter 2 i.e. contextual; emotional; temporo-spatial. Further elaboration of themes addressed in the literature review chapter [Chapter 2] occurs throughout the analysis stage. The use of a dimensional model fragments the integrated learning experiences of beginning teachers into constituent parts for the purpose of analysis. However, I acknowledge that the actual journey articulated by each beginning teacher participant is a more complex whole than the sum of its parts.

Chapter 4: Contextuality and the shaping of beginning teacher identity

Identity indexes a meta-theory in education and other fields. Though a concept that researchers define and explore in a multitude of ways (Beijaard et al. 2004; Beauchamp and Thomas 2009, pp. 175-6), over recent years, a burgeoning of research has deepened and complicated our understanding of the role of identity in learning to teach (Rodgers and Scott 2008). Initial conceptualisations of identity took for granted singularity, continuity and persistence through time. Erickson, for example (1950, 1968, 1974 cited in Wetherell 2010, p. 6), was interested in how a coherent identity, manifested as an authentic and stable self, might develop across the lifespan. However, no longer is identity conceived of as describing a self-producing, enduring and distinctive individual. Instead, conceived of as plural, fluid and mutually constitutive (e.g. Holland et al. 1998), the conceptualisation of identity and the settings in which identity is activated through participation-in-practice, leads to an enhanced understanding of the interrelatedness of context and the shaping of identity (Rodgers and Scott 2008; Wetherell 2010; Hamman et al. 2010; Czerniawski 2011).

My main task, in this chapter, is to help elucidate the mutually constitutive, dialogical manner in which beginning teacher identity is shaped in the 'fields', 'spaces' and 'places' (Holland et al. 1998, p. 287; Akkerman and Meijer 2011) where society organises beginning teachers. In doing so, I will help address the underemphasised consideration of situational and contextual factors within the broader framework of teachers' professional identity studies (Beijaard et al. 2004). Drawing on three interrelated 'contexts of identity' (Holland et al. 1998, pp. 271-272), namely, figured worlds, positionality, and space of authoring, an analytic distinction is made between

these separable rather than separate aspects of identity. Accordingly, this chapter is organised under three corresponding main headings, all directly bearing on contextuality and the shaping of identity, entitled: multimembership and the shaping of figurative identities; shaping positional identities: the mediating role of 'power relations'; and, beginning teacher as 'active person': shaping as well as being shaped. Table 4A provides an overview of how the three overarching aspects of identity addressed in this chapter relate to the work of Holland et al. (1998).

Table 4A Overarching, context-related aspects of identity

'Contexts of identity' (Holland et al. 1998, pp. 271-272),	**Overarching, context-related aspects of identity addressed in my study**
Figured worlds	Section 4.1: Multimembership and the shaping of figurative identities
Positionality	Section 4.2: Shaping positional identities: the mediating role of 'power relations'
Space of authoring	Section 4.3: Beginning teacher as 'active person': shaping as well as being shaped.

4.1 Multimembership and the shaping of figurative identities

As we simultaneously participate in multiple communities of practice (Wenger 1998), we can be considered to possess multimembership of various activity systems, some proximate, others more far flung. Thus, the shaping of beginners' identities cannot be considered in isolation from the network of values, relationships and artefacts, which constitute a range of contexts of significance to the shaping process. Nor can the

shaping of an individual beginning teacher identity be fully explained within the site-specific, 'bounded' context of a well defined, discrete, school-based system alone. Instead, wider fields of influence - familial, social, economic, historical, institutional, cultural and educational – also have to be taken into consideration (Britzman 2003, pp. 69-73; Hodkinson et al. 2008; Waldron 2012, p. 21). Possessing traction with the concept of 'figured worlds' (Holland et al. 1998), acknowledging multimembership, on the parts of beginning teachers, of these wider, enmeshed, imprecise, fluid, overlapping and intersecting 'fields of influence', helps overcome deficiencies characteristic of more site-specific, 'bounded' views of identity.

The concept of figured worlds refers to the taken-for-granted historical and social phenomena into which individuals enter or are recruited and which are then reproduced and developed through the practices of their participants (Hall 2008, p. 89). To varying degrees both static and ever changing, figured worlds are composed of the everyday narratives, images, understandings, beliefs, values and attitudes that help different social, cultural and professional groups of people make sense of the world. In this manner, individuals determine what is normal and typical within a particular figured world. In turn, what is taken as normal and typical inform interactions within that figured world. Thus, *figured identities* are all about rules; how individuals engage with each other in the context of the activities that inform that world. These rules are presumed, so they originate in the imagination. Apart from figured worlds, these typical stories have been given many different names: scenarios, scripts, mental models, cultural models, discourse models (Gee 2011, p. 42); frames of meaning, forms of belonging, and realms of interpretation (Holland et al. 1998).

What is taken to be typical or normal, of course, varies by context and by people's sociocultural affiliations. The taken-for-granted nature of figured worlds is, thus, frequently, heavily contested. As a result, in a mutually constitutive, dialogic fashion, agentic actions on the part of participants, albeit to varying degrees, shape their own identities while influencing the ongoing developmental nature of their figured worlds. Accordingly, while always conscious of a propensity among beginners to act conservatively, and, thus, help fossilise practice, my study also investigates how the figurative identities of beginners are agentically shaped through their participation in practice with others populating their figured worlds.

Premised on identity shaping as inseparable from the social and cultural practices in which individuals are engaged, the concept of figured worlds is thus chosen as a conceptual binding or integrative framework to help elucidate the mutually constitutive, dialogic manner in which the shaping of beginners' identities occurs. Well developed in a range of areas adopting an anthropological stance (e.g. Holland et al. 1998; Tonso 2006; Hall 2008; Skinner et al. 2001) and in the general area of literacy studies (e.g. Bartlett and Holland 2002; Marsh and Lammers 2011; López-Bonilla 2011), the concept of figured worlds is much less developed in other spheres, including teacher identity studies. With the potential to prove illuminating and enriching, applying the concept of figured worlds in my study will help make visible and understandable how beginning teachers shape their figurative identities.

In the following chapter sub-sections, the concept of multimembership is organised under three interrelated headings, all directly bearing on the shaping of figurative identities within figured worlds, entitled: family, community and mere happenstance;

earlier learning lives and apprenticeships of observation; and, beginning to teach: coping with becoming a 'visible person'. These three interrelated categories emerged from repeated rounds of conceptually or theoretically informed readings of the data set.

4.1.1 Family, community and mere happenstance

Parental influence emerges as significant in shaping the nascent identities of participants. While possibly a function of the 'snowball' sampling methodology employed, in the case of six of the nine research participants (Oisín; Ruth; Fiona; Niall; Olivia; Danielle), at least one parent is either a primary or a post-primary teacher. While, hopefully, not reminiscent of the 'closed world' nature of an anthropological study of the mountain village of "Balllybran", undertaken in County Kerry in the 1970's (Scheper-Hughes 1979), in the cases of three of those participants (Oisín; Ruth; Fiona) - both parents are teachers!

While having a parent who is a teacher is a significant influence on those who choose to become primary teachers, the decision to do so on the part of the other three participants (Geraldine, Liam, Bernadette), illustrates that other forms of influence are also important. In the cases of Geraldine and Liam, in particular, both of whom spring from backgrounds that are underrepresented or 'non-traditional' among entrants to teaching (Greaney and Mulryan 1991, p. 105; Hyland 2012, p. 10), their decision to enter the world of primary teaching modifies somewhat the dominant 'cultural script' informing decisions to teach. On the other hand, far from being uniform in effect, for those participants who spring from a teaching background, parental influence combined in various ways to provide internalised images of the figured world of

teaching, which research participants, for a variety of reasons, both differentiated themselves from and identified with. Therefore, as a consequence of either resisting, engaging or re-engaging with the figured world of primary teaching, complex and variable figurative identity shaping realities emerge from the data. For Oisín, nearing the conclusion of his post-primary schooling, the direct promptings of his teacher father were stoutly resisted:

> Oisín: ……just before 'the leaving' [Leaving Certificate Examination] my father actually did mention to me, as he usually does, 'primary school teaching is the way for you because you can play music, you have a bit of the sport, you have the Gaeilge, and you are always teaching some way or another in the Irish colleges.' And I just refused point blank, 'no I am not doing it, no I am not listening to that'.
>
> Interviewer: But the fact that your father was a primary teacher, the fact that your mother is a teacher too, a second level teacher, was there something that you didn't want to repeat? You didn't want to become or try the same profession as your parents?
>
> Oisín: No I wasn't really thinking at all, all I was concerned about was dad was telling me what to do and I am not going to listen to him, that was it, I didn't think of it twice. He is trying to tell me what to do and I am not going to listen even if I do like it [Oisín, Interview 1].

Yet, four years later, having completed an undergraduate degree at university, a somewhat regretful but more self-assured Oisín had a change of mind: *I saw sense in the end and got the interview and ended up in [college of education] which was annoying, four years after I left secondary school…… I knew at that stage this is what I want to do because there is nothing else that I am more suited for* [Oisín, Interview 1].

Resistance is also evident in Ruth's case. However, unlike Oisín's experience of resisting paternal promptings towards a career in teaching, conversely Ruth's

resistance was in response to her teaching parents' attempts to dissuade her from entering the teaching profession: *I'd say they tried to really push me in another direction.....and on the whole it took a long time for them to be more encouraging towards teaching. But I didn't really have any interest in doing anything else in a way* [Ruth, Interview 1]. For Fiona, cocooned *in an education bubble* [Interview 3], in assessing the influence of her teaching parents on her decision to engage with teaching, actions speak louder than words: *what you'd hear from them would be, you would always hear the bad I suppose more so than the good when you are at home so I don't think there was much of a push towards it but you could see that the way they would teach and the way they would go about things was really helpful* [Fiona, Interview 1].

In Olivia's case, a range of familial influences complicated her teaching-related decision making. Early experiences working with young children in her mother's crèche positively disposed her towards primary school teaching (Weinstein 1988; Sugrue 1997, p. 216). However, in a curious form of reverse sibling rivalry, not wishing to be seen as emulating her sister, who was single minded with respect to choosing primary teaching as a career, having completed an undergraduate degree, Olivia pursued a career in the commercial sector for a number of years. A brief experience as a substitute teacher, while undertaking a postgraduate diploma in management and marketing, was sufficient to rekindle an interest in engaging with primary teaching: *So I really enjoyed that and I was always thinking back, God I really liked that even though it was only two weeks of my life* [Olivia, Interview 1]. Now, having completed a postgraduate diploma in primary education and ensconced

in her first teaching post, Olivia is convinced she has made the right decision: *I think finally at 30 years of age I am doing what I want to be doing* [Interview 1].

For others, no such early reservations complicated the path towards choosing primary teaching as a career. However, a variety of motivational sources appear to be of primary importance. In Niall's case, no well trodden, traditional pathways existed between the all-boys secondary school he attended and centres of initial teacher education for primary teachers. Instead, it was a mixture of an intrinsic motivation to teach and the non-pressurising influence of observing his teacher mother's work-related lifestyle that proved most influential:

> …..I suppose my mother would have had an influence on me because she is a teacher as well, that is not to say that she pressured me in any way to become a teacher. But I liked the life that she had I suppose, there is a lot to be said for it I think, helping people and at the same time finish your work at 2:30 in the day and you have evenings. But that is not the main reason I became a teacher, I just like the idea of helping people and working with children and just teaching [Niall, Interview 1].

In Bernadette's case, though parental, particularly maternal, influence is significant, firmly-rooted rural traditions (Sugrue 2004) in respect of choosing primary teaching as a career, proved crucial. Hailing from a family whose career choices were decidedly non-academic, Bernadette was the first member of her extended family to attend a teacher education college. In making her choice, the influence of her local community and peers is readily apparent:

> Bernadette: The year that I went to [name of college], 6 out of my year went to [name of college] as well, and there was only 30 of us in the class and 6 went up to [name of college].
>
> Interviewer: So 20% of the class went to training college.
>
> Bernadette: Yes and it is the same this year [2010-2011], there is another 4, like we used to go up on the bus from our local town and half the bus would be where I am from [Bernadette, Interview 1].

However, other research participants, from equally underrepresented or 'non-traditional' teaching backgrounds, did not have recourse to the firmly-rooted rural values which so influenced Bernadette in her teaching-related decision making. Instead, their decisions to engage with primary teaching owe much to happenstance. In Geraldine's case, hailing from a tightly-knit, urban working class community, being *the first teacher in my entire family* [Interview 1] owes much to the example set by her mother's decision to return to formal education. In Liam's world, though, as he neared the end of post-primary schooling, neither family nor post-primary school proved influential in steering him in the direction of a career in teaching. Coming from a family with *absolutely* no connections to teaching, Liam found career guidance at his all-boys post-primary school to be *wanting:*

> We were all instructed to do arts and I didn't know what arts was at the time which will show you the, not naivety but not informed really…….I only heard of this place [name of primary teacher education college] once or twice [Liam, Interview 1].

As it transpired, Liam did not undertake an arts degree. Instead, he completed a four-year marketing degree at an institute of technology. At the conclusion of that degree course, Liam, rather fortuitously, attended a career guidance presentation at his college. Among options outlined:

> ……they mentioned a post grad in primary school teaching. At this point I hadn't thought too much what route I wanted to go down marketing, business or sales, or do a masters or do a post grad. So I kind of gave it some thought, looked into it, went down to my old primary school, sat in for a few days, observed, tried my hand at it. Then I kind of knew that that is what I wanted to do [Liam, Interview 1].

Having unsuccessfully applied for a place on a postgraduate diploma course in primary teaching, after spending a year working abroad, Liam's persistence was

finally rewarded when he successfully secured a place as a mature candidate on a three-year Bachelor of Education degree course. In his new surroundings, Liam became acutely aware of the gendered and inter-generational character of the figured world of primary teaching in Ireland, and of how his own journey towards primary teaching might have been less circuitous if he had had a familial connection to teaching and access to informed career guidance at his school:

> ……in college I would say half of the people had a direct parent or relation, an aunt or uncle who were heavily involved in it [primary teaching] and if I knew somebody who was involved in it and saw a positive in it, earlier on, coming to the leaving cert, I would have been inclined to maybe go down that route because it is just one of those jobs that traditionally as a male in your late teens it wouldn't have been on the agenda [Liam, Interview 1].

These accounts reveal that choosing to teach in Ireland is a complex and variable experience. From the outset, among participants, decision-making in relation to choosing primary teaching as a career was characterised by a significant degree of variability. Thus, complexifying Sugrue's (1997, p. 216) more linear representation of the socially constructed nature of a teaching identity, for most participants, choosing to teach, even in cases of initial resistance, either on their own parts or on the parts of significant others, owed much to adherence to deeply-entrenched family and community-related values and traditions (Bourdieu 1984 cited in Hodkinson and Hodkinson 2004b; Holland et al. 1998; Holland and Lave 2009). For others, however, especially those from underrepresented, 'non traditional' teaching backgrounds, the decision to teach owed as much to happenstance as to circumstance. The mixture of happenstance and circumstance is somewhat reminiscent of a model of careership advanced to explain career decision-making as the navigation of a path between social determinism and unbridled freedom of choice (Hodkinson and Sparkes 1997).

4.1.2 Earlier learning lives and apprenticeships of observation

Early biographical experiences influence the professional self-image of beginning teachers, as well as their conception of education, and they form a personal interpretation framework for their professional conduct as teachers (Vloet 2009, p. 71). Relevant biographical aspects include early childhood experiences, and positive and negative early teacher role models. From this "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie 1975), pupils internalise elements from the figured worlds of teaching which are activated when they become teachers. Crucially, however, in my study, the "apprenticeship of observation" is not understood in a Lortian sense, privileging the deterministic influence of context, but interactively and dialogically as the taking up of "dominant meanings as if they were their authors" or in terms of "what they make happen because of what happens to them" (Britzman 2003, p. 70).

My study uncovered ample evidence that early teacher role models, both positive and negative, shape the nascent teaching identities of beginning teachers. Two examples are representative. For Liam, there is an indelible quality to the impact of role models: *those kinds of teachers and those scenarios... it just stays with you no matter how old you get* [Interview 1]. Equally, Ruth, in attempting to be *that kind of teacher,* valiantly tries to remember how positive role models succeeded as teachers: *Now I am always like, how did they do that? ..... I would love to zoom back or go back to the class* [Interview 1].

While it is clear that beginning teachers remember their teachers, Lortie (1975) claims that what beginners learn about teaching during the "apprenticeship of observation" is intuitive and imitative, rather than explicit and analytical; "it is based on individual personalities rather than 'pedagogical principles' " (p. 62). While viewing the 'personal' and the 'pedagogical' in such starkly dualistic terms has fallen out of favour with the passage of time (e.g. Hodkinson et al. 2008), nonetheless, my study uncovers just such a tendency among beginners. Thus, an imitative focus among beginners on the desirable personal traits of positive early teacher role models rather than on their 'pedagogical principles', is readily apparent in the data set. For example, in emulating positive role models, Geraldine is of the view that attending to the affective domain is, perhaps, of greater importance than aspiring *'to teach at the highest level'*:

> Geraldine: I don't think I ever looked at how professional a teacher of mine was, it was just their way, how they made the students feel, how they interact with students…… And that was the type of teacher that I wanted to be, I wanted every student to be safe in my classroom. Obviously I want to teach at the highest level I can but I want every child to be safe…… what I remember from school isn't the teachers I learned the most from, it is the teachers I was happiest with.
> [Geraldine, Interview 1].

Equally, for Bernadette, a lesson learned intuitively during her post primary schooling is that the relational qualities of humour and personality are of key importance in the classroom: *when I was in secondary school I had this male teacher and he was so funny and we all loved him and we all got A's in our Irish because we hung onto every word he ever said to us. So I think humour has a good part in it and have a good personality with the children.* Bernadette's memories of that particular positive role model inform her early practice as a teacher: *when I am teaching I have some of his sayings and stuff like, 'I am not spoon-feeding you'* [Interview 1]. Olivia also professes strong feelings for admired former teachers: …..*I remember my 1st class*

teacher and I remember my senior teacher, just loving them [Interview 1]. While more pedagogically focused, Fiona's imitative practice of engaging in incidental conversational Irish with her pupils, *learning without even realising it*, emulates the incidental learning opportunities afforded her by her primary school principal during her own primary schooling [Interview 1].

Readily apparent from these examples of positive role models is that for beginners "inherited 'good teaching' cultural scripts" (Conway et al. 2012) are primarily based on perceptions of the teacher as empathetic "facilitator". Managerial images of the 'good teacher' as "executive" do not feature as prominently, while references to the 'good teacher' as mind opening, horizon raising "liberationist" are conspicuously absent (Fenstermacher and Soltis 2009).

Negative role models are also a significant shaping influence on beginners, leading to a questioning of and resistance to less savoury elements from the figured worlds of teaching. Intuitive in the manner of their positive equivalents, Fiona remembers the *sheer authority* of a negative role model [Interview 1]. Negative memories generate resistance in the form of beginners actively seeking to avoid emulating negative school experiences in their own practice. For instance, Olivia has memories of *a really strict teacher* and of being *fearful every day*. Now, as a teacher in her own right, Olivia is attempting to undo the effects of negative practices witnessed as a child:

> Olivia: They used to ask us about that in some of the lectures in [college of education], they were like, why do you remember him? Because I don't want to be like him I suppose……So now when people come into my class I am always asking them loads of questions, but nice questions, I'd be keeping them there chatting.

Interviewer: You are almost undoing the damage he did.

Olivia: I suppose yes in a way.

Also motivated to undo the effects of a negative role model encountered at post-primary level, in this case in relation to a non-inclusive classroom practice, Bernadette actively fosters the principles of inclusivity in her own practice:

> Bernadette: In this particular class it was honours English and he seated the students according to our ability, higher at the back and then those who scored lower marks up the front, and I was always in the front row in the corner and it used to be fun for a while but after a bit then.....
>
> Interviewer: It got to wear thin?
>
> Bernadette: Yes.
>
> Interviewer: So the grading of the class as he perceived it was very obvious in the classroom?
>
> Bernadette: Yes.
>
> Interviewer: So, streaming and things then, you wouldn't like that?
>
> Bernadette: No, in my classroom I have 6 groups, I have 29 children in my class and I have 9 boys and 20 girls and they are mixed according to their ability and gender. I think that is very important [Bernadette, Interview 1].

In this regard, Ma and Singer-Gabella (2011, p. 20) propose that although identity is often defined in terms of how one is seen by others, the act of seeing others as certain kinds of people is itself an enactment of a way of being in the world - a reflexive positioning in a figured world or community of practice. At the same time that available models of identity influence developing identities, developing identities shape individuals' understandings of different models of identity. The motivations of both Olivia and Bernadette to undo the effects of negative role models experienced during the course of their own schooling, lends credence to the view advanced by Holland et al. (1998, p. 143) that when individuals learn about figured worlds and come, in some sense, to identify themselves in those worlds, their participation may

include reactions to the treatment they themselves received as occupants of positions figured by those worlds.

Imitative practice is also evident among beginners in their adherence to traditional pedagogical practices. This arises because the 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie 1975), which beginning teachers served during the course of their own schooling, given national pedagogic traditions in Ireland, frequently resulted in their exposure to a range of archetypal, dominantly didactic, teaching styles (OECD 1991; Sugrue 1997, 2004). As the cumulative experience of school life can act as a filter, screening out content from initial teacher education programmes that challenge the 'observational apprenticeship', subsequent conceptions of pedagogy are, frequently, similarly didactic. The prominence of didacticism is certainly evident in Liam's early pedagogical thinking:

> Interviewer: Where does the balance lie in your own teaching? Is it more didactic than group orientated and discovery based?
>
> Liam: ……....Discovery learning is brilliant and kind of idealistic but if you have too much discovery learning is the child actually going to come away with anything? Because there are a lot falling through the cracks already so if you are away giving them the ownership of the learning you would be waiting a long time for someone to actually learn something and discover something [Liam, Interview 1].

Equally, Niall places faith in the effectiveness of a traditional, though increasingly questioned, spelling practice:

> …….I think it [memory-based spelling test] has to be done because if you just tell them to learn spellings and they are never examined then eventually they will cop on and they just won't learn them…….it is old fashioned but it is good and it works [Niall, Interview 1].

Bernadette is also enamoured of this long standing pedagogic practice:

> Interviewer: Are there any teachers from your own primary and secondary education that you find yourself modelling your teaching on?
>
> Bernadette: Let's say from national [primary] school I had this one teacher and if I didn't have him I wouldn't know how to spell or do my tables to this day so I suppose from him I know that the fun and everything is great but at the end of the day, oh my God you have to be able to learn your spellings. I know we do these things with spellings every morning, I do like blast off with them and like, how many letters has help? And if they put up 4 fingers we go, h-e-l-p. These kinds of things and they are all great fun but like come Friday I still give the traditional.....
>
> Interviewer: The spelling test.
>
> Bernadette: The spelling test. Some things, they may be old fashioned but some things, if they don't know their spellings, you are sending home to be signed, mum can see, dad can see, and I think it is very important that the parents know there is a big spelling test on Friday. Why don't you learn your spellings, you know it is going to be on Friday? [Bernadette, Interview 1].

Clearly, the influences of longstanding pedagogic traditions exert a profound shaping influence on the tacit dispositions and figurative identities of many beginning teachers. These vignettes support Lortie's (1975) view that the aggregate of these early experiences are difficult to "shift" in an initial teacher education programme. However, given that beginners "refashion, resist, or even take up dominant meanings as if they were their authors" (Britzman 2003, p. 70), the persistence of traditional, didactic practices, has a more complex explanation than the simplistic accusation that teacher education is anaemic in its effects arising from its disconnection from frontline realities (Feiman-Nemser 2010). Consequently, beginning teaching may be marked by a realignment or accommodation of identity as new teachers begin the process of reconciling messages about teaching that may differ between the constructivist nature of initial teacher education settings and the more traditionally orientated actual schools and classrooms where they are now working (Smagorinsky et al. 2004).

Important aspects of a first-year teacher's figurative identity would include how they are disposed to view the task of teaching, what personal, tacit theories they bring to that task, their expectations of what beginning teaching involves, how they are disposed to engage with the range of learning situations encountered, and teaching approaches embraced as distinct from dispensed with. Sometimes existing dispositions are reinforced. At other times, new dispositions are formed, or existing dispositions changed. As such, particular epistemological perspectives are temporally dominant and, thus, always in a dialogical relationship. This dialogue is not necessarily harmonious; hence the negotiated nature of identity shaping. Any aspect of identity may become dominant at a particular time, influencing the beginning teacher's sense of well-being and effectiveness. Consequently, a useful way of understanding the shaping of beginning teachers' identities is as a process through which the dispositions that, respectively, constitute their habitus are confirmed, developed, challenged or changed (Akkerman and Meijer 2011). In my study, tensions arising from such a dialogical realignment or accommodation of identity characterised the early-career experiences of participants.

Geraldine is frequently conflicted between the constructivist principles espoused by her *really idealised* initial teacher education programme, the didactic nature of her own schooling, and didactically informed instructions on the part of her principal: *oh they would have to have a bit of rote learning, there is no harm in them learning off a story or a prayer*. As a result, Geraldine feels *kind of torn between two worlds* [Interview 1]. Overall, though, Geraldine's pedagogic philosophy owes more to the experiences of childhood than to her more recent initial teacher education

experiences. Judged as lacking in commitment to the *nitty gritty* elements of schooling, Geraldine is of the view that personnel attached to her initial teacher education programme *were so focused on turning us into these new teachers that are different than before that they kind of forgot about the stuff that still had to maybe stay the same* [Interview 1]. Symptomatic of constructivist caution (Airasian and Walsh 1997), Geraldine's dilemma arises from the realisation that implementing constructivism in the classroom is considerably more challenging than might have been anticipated from the unproblematised advocacy of those who facilitated her programme of initial teacher education.

Equally, for Oisín, ideas learnt during initial teacher education do not transfer smoothly into the initial year of teaching (Haggarty and Postlethwaite 2009). In Oisín's case, though, beginning practice involves a mixture of strategic adherence to progressive principles at the planning stage, arising from probationary-related obligations, but subsequent pursuit of didactically informed objectives at the implementation stage:

> Oisín: ……they [teacher educators] gave us lots of theories, lots of different terms……..and you don't really think of the terms when you are teaching. You know them in your head but you wouldn't actually apply them in the classroom. You would write them in the reports and write them in the plan but that would be it, you know.
>
> Interviewer: But as you are teaching, are you not conscious of what they say?
>
> Oisín: No, what is conscious is always, are they [pupils] getting it right or are they not getting it right? [Oisín, Interview 3]

Oisín's pedagogic views lend credence to Shipman's (1967a cited in Zeichner and Tabachnick 1981) explanation as to why beginners adhere to conservative practices;

the employment of "impression management" i.e. beginners, as in Oisín's case, maintain *"two levels of professional attitude, one for official use on stage, and one for use backstage, out of official hearing, or later on in the classroom"* (1976a cited in Zeichner and Tabachnick 1981, p. 8). Cumulatively, the beginning experiences of Geraldine and Oisín illustrate that the adoption of conservative pedagogical approaches among beginners is more complex than the linearly imitative process highlighted by Lortie (1975).

4.1.2.1 Helping beginners to look beyond the familiar

Regardless of the nature of its causation, the prevalence of conservative practice on the part of beginners has significant implications for initial teacher education. As long ago as 1981, Zeichner and Tabachnick stated that by emphasising the techniques of teaching, the *how* of practice, and by marginalising the *what* and the *why* of practice, initial teacher education programmes encouraged conservatism and conformity among beginners. In relation to overcoming that conservatism, Feiman-Nemser (1983) states that the likelihood that professional study will affect what powerful early experiences have inscribed on the mind will depend on its power to cultivate images of the possible and desirable and to forge commitments to make those images a reality. Yet, frequently, beginning teachers judge the adequacy of their formal preparation by the extent to which it gives them technical knowledge (Feiman-Nemser 1983). Thirty years later, that assertion is certainly borne out in the present undertaking: *all this stuff that has no huge bearing on……you even went back to Socrates a small bit* [Liam, Interview 1]; *the main difference between training college and reality* [Fiona, e-mail 1]; *they could have had less of the old 'ologies', as we called them…….like we learned about Dewey and all these, like I am never again going to have to do that.*

……I can't remember their names; they are going to mean nothing to me teaching rang a dó (2nd class). *But then I preferred my practical things* [Bernadette, Interview 1]; *……..like a year and a half spent on these 'ologies'…….sociology and development psychology and blah, blah, blah. ……I personally just took a grudge to that. Why didn't they just give us some nice ideas for Christmas?* [Ruth, Interview 1].

Given the scenarios outlined above, Feiman-Nemser's (1983) view, expressed three decades ago, that unless formal training can modify pre-existent images of teachers and teaching, future teachers will practice what their teachers did, is equally apt today. To do so, Feiman-Nemser (1983) stressed the necessity of going beyond viewing teaching as a 'bag of tricks and quick tips'. Instead, teaching and learning should be rigorously cloaked in reflective practice and inquiry; skills have a place, but they cannot replace ideas. Significantly, programmes of initial teacher education must help teachers to look beyond the familiar worlds of teaching and learning; in becoming a teacher, very little desired learning can be trusted to come about without instruction that takes the common sense preconceptions of future teachers into account, preconceptions that are warranted by the conventional practice that future teachers are already steeped in. A powerful curriculum for learning to teach has to be orientated around the intellectual and practical or clinical tasks of teaching and the contexts of teachers' work (Feiman-Nemser 2001, p. 1048; Grossman et al 2009). The lack of explicit teaching in teacher education, not unalterable facts about teachers, may explain the charge that teachers are conservative and individualistic (Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann 1985, p. 65). Impacting on the inclination of beginners to act conservatively and individualistically, demands that they be facilitated in interrogating the figured worlds of teaching. Though it may have occurred inadvertently, Olivia's reminiscence, cited earlier, of being questioned during the

course of a lecture session, as to why her memories of a negative role model were so vivid, is encouraging evidence of interrogative practice with those about to enter our classrooms as beginning professionals.

4.1.3 Beginning to teach: Coping with becoming a 'visible person'

Frequently, for beginning teachers, identity is a construction of society or the world around them, an "ought" self that represents what is expected of them, the role they must fulfil according to common societal views of teaching (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Lauriala and Kukkonen 2005 cited in Thomas and Beauchamp 2011). Moreover, Ibarra (2003 cited in Czerniawski 2011, p. 444) stresses that the "look and feel" of a teaching identity is specific to particular national contexts. In identifying embedded cultural archetypes dominant in popular perceptions of primary school teachers in Irish culture, Sugrue cites Irish literary sources to sketch the contours of the "Master" and the "Mistress" (1996, 1997, 2004). While not suggesting that these archetypes are the reality in schools in contemporary Ireland, nonetheless Sugrue (1996, p. 158) suggests that their dominant characteristics provide important cultural signifiers against which the shaping of beginning teachers' identities can be analysed. A beginning teacher's experience can, therefore, be one not only of active construction of an identity, but also one of an imposed or "designated identity" (Sfard and Prusak 2005, p. 14) stemming from societal or cultural conceptions of teachers, suggesting the need and capacity for agency on the part of beginning teachers.

That agency is abundantly evident in Danielle's reluctance to identify with the traditional archetypal image of the teacher in Irish society: *I do pride myself in the fact that I don't put myself on the same pedestal that my primary school teachers put*

themselves on [Interview 3]. Danielle's reluctance to identify with the figured world of her predecessors in the teaching profession stems from her own educational experiences. That reluctance is manifest in her desire *to teach differently as a reaction to how* [she] *was taught ……..the fear of getting things wrong.* Though, undoubtedly, the placement of the teacher on a *pedestal* equates, in the main, to an imposed identity, the forcefulness of Danielle's reaction stems from her judgement that previous generations of teachers willingly accepted that ascribed identity and behaved accordingly, as manifested in their treatment of their charges [Interview 3]. Use of the term *pedestal*, to invoke the notion of position, furnishes an example of how, within figured worlds, an object becomes inscribed by the collective attribution of meaning, in this case conceptual rather than material meaning (Bartlett and Holland 2002, p. 12). As with Danielle, Bernadette also resists an imposed teacherly identity, but, unlike Danielle, is not confident that she will ultimately succeed:

> Bernadette: ……..I think it is kind of good like to fight the stereotype; they do expect you to be a certain way……I think because I am young I am still fighting the status quo a bit but as the time goes on I think I might give into the status quo after a while.
>
> Interviewer: And the status quo is?
>
> Bernadette: You know; that you will be a proper lady [Interview 3].

A figured world lens facilitates an understanding of how Danielle and Bernadette interpret their situations. Despite their differing expectations with respect to the outcome of their actions, in questioning the traditional figured world of the teacher, and in possessing a capability to figure it otherwise than it is, both Danielle and Bernadette fix upon objectifications of themselves that they find unacceptable. These objectifications become the organising basis of resentment, especially on the part of

Danielle, and represent a rupture in the taken-for-granted automatic performance of ascribed roles (Holland et al. 1998, p. 143).

A more archetypically faithful perception of the teacher in society is represented in Olivia's response that teachers still remain *kind of placed up on a pedestal* [Interview 2]. Equally, Liam believes that despite the influence of modernising forces in Irish society, *the teacher is still someone who is perceived as somebody that encompasses a lot of skills and knowledge* [Interview 3]. The validity of this view is evident in Niall's experience at his local GAA [Gaelic Games] club: *I don't see myself as part of it* [possessing a teacherly identity] *but I suppose I am and people see me as part of it. Even recently, before a match at the GAA club, the team had to be written out in Irish so they asked me to write in their names because a lot of the other lads on the team wouldn't have Irish* [Niall, Interview 3]. Clearly, vestiges of the figured world of the 'Master' (Sugrue 2004) are still in existence, even, as in this case, in urban settings. Contrastingly, Fiona detects erosion in the status of the teacher in society, believing that the position of the teacher is increasingly perceived as *cushy.* This *perception* of a figured world in retreat contrasts, in Fiona's view, with the respect formally accorded to the archetypal, rural based teacher when *an old school might have had 40 or 50 students and* [he/she] *might have been the only teacher in the area* [Interview 3].

In the early 1930's, as Brian MacMahon began his teaching career in his native Listowel, Co. Kerry, he was immediately aware of his visibility in the community, and not in a notional sense, but quite literally:

> …I began to teach my huddle of scholars beside the grimy window that looked out directly onto the street. Every head passing on the pavement outside turned to gawk in at me (MacMahon 1992, p. 6).

Whatever changes have been visited upon the professional status of the teacher in Irish society in the interim, as they assume their positions in the workplace, as with Brian MacMahon over eighty years ago, beginners remain conscious of their visibility in the general community (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a, p. 111) and of what equates to a moral obligation to live up to societal expectations of the teacher: *people view you as almost a perfect person that the children admire* [Niall, Interview 3].

These expectations can lead to the circumscription of many aspects of personal behaviour: individual expression; choice of dress code; the public consumption of alcohol; social media usage: *Reducing expressing individuality of the personality……and you can't be too outspoken either* [Liam, Interview 3*]*;*……. last weekend I was out with a few of the teachers and we were in a bar and the parents of a girl from my class were in there and they were kind of glancing over every so often so you do have to be careful* [Niall, Interview 3]; *I remember my going away party, I was out and I had a bottle of champagne going around the place and when you bump into parents you don't know whether to hide it or go on with it* [Bernadette, Interview 3];…… *you are more conscious of what you are wearing, where you are, even stuff like pictures on Facebook, like you wouldn't be putting up stuff that you may have put up before if you are out in a pub of something* [Fiona, Interview 3].

Thus, tensions can arise between the person a teacher wants to be at work and in everyday life, leading to ambivalence and the adoption of a more proactive approach towards reconciling private and public obligations. Indicative of the multiple nature of

identity (Rodgers and Scott 2008), this is apparent in Geraldine's attitude towards the position of the teacher in society:

> Geraldine: …….. I do think as a teacher you are almost meant to live the way you are encouraging the children to live and if you don't you have to pretend that you do. I remember a question in our religion class in [college of education] and we were talking about how many schools were Catholic and stuff. And one guy said to the lecturer, 'what if you are an atheist?' And she said, 'don't let the principal know, don't let anyone know.' And I think that was a real sign that when you are the teacher you are what you are meant to be and you can do whatever you want outside of it.
> [Geraldine, Interview 2].

Geraldine's viewpoint also resonates with Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical model of social life, that is, all social life is theatrical. Goffman revolves his view of human life around the belief that we are all actors who have both 'front' stage behaviour and 'back' stage behaviour. We follow the formal societal rules when we are on the front stage reciting a 'script', playing a 'role'. Alternatively, our back stage behaviour is individualistic and informal. Goffman's model of social life closely resembles Shipman's theory of 'impression management' (1967a cited in Zeichner and Tabachnick 1981), used elsewhere in this study to explain the adherence of beginning teachers to conservative pedagogic practices.

Unlike Brian MacMahon, who made a virtue of living cheek by jowl with the small town community he served as a teacher (MacMahon 1992), living in the school hinterland causes beginners in my study to become increasingly aware of boundaries between the public and private spheres of life, and to become sensitive to the possibility of incursions into their private life sphere. To minimise the likelihood of potential incursions, teachers frequently prefer to live, even undertake routine tasks like shopping, outside the school hinterland: *I think teachers like their distance, they*

like to keep things a bit separate, and they don't want to be bumping into parents [Ruth, Interview 2]; ……..*even going into* [name of supermarket] *you are bound to meet 50% of the parents so I would never go to Ballytown* [alias] *anymore* [Olivia, Interview 3].

Similarly, in choosing where to teach, Bernadette is adamant that her decision to accept an offer of employment in a school located a very considerable distance from her native locality was the correct decision for her:

> …….right now I think it is very important to go away and grow in confidence and if any parent has any issue they can so easily come into you, compared to at home they would be a bit... they'd be coming in and your mother and your aunt …… and they are connected to your neighbour and what is going to be the word on the street tomorrow morning? Compared to where I am nobody knows me and it is better I think [Bernadette, Interview 1].

Even in a school community where *nobody knows* her, Bernadette remains conscious of the problematic nature of attempting to learn how to successfully deal with tensions between the person a teacher is obliged to be at work and in everyday life. In relation to interacting with the parents of the pupils in her class, Bernadette muses:

> …….like I don't know sometimes if I should keep my teacher face on me or am I ok to sit down and have a bit of a chat with them. I am going with the chat thing because that is what I am more comfortable with but maybe if other teachers are more comfortable with..... [Interview 1].

While choosing to teach a considerable distance from her native locality may have solved one set of visibility problems for Bernadette, her visibility in the school hinterland of her new location is proximate to say the least.

> Bernadette: I live right next door to one of the kids in my class, but her mother is so nice because she sat her down and explained how múinteoir

> [teacher] will be different outside school and will dress differently and the music will be up loud [Bernadette, Interview 2].

If the vignette above illustrates the degree to which Bernadette is visible in her school community, the following vignette is redolent, not so much of visibility, as claustrophobia!

> Bernadette: …….because [name of parent of child in her class] lives right next door, and I meet her out because I always go to the same pub and I always meet her there and she is like, 'you are a party animal, oh Rhianna [pop singer] is going morning, noon and night.' She is like, 'we know when you are up anyway and we can hear the car and the laughing.' I am so loud. [Bernadette, Interview 3].

For Geraldine, who returned to her neighbourhood school to teach, to the same school which she had attended as a child, the level of visibility is equally claustrophobic. When located in her classroom, Geraldine's sense of being in the public gaze is acute:

> Geraldine: …… it is something that hit me, I am kind of more used to it now but it definitely was very overwhelming at the start when I realised what a public job it was because I think you are in the classroom and you feel like it is your classroom and you forget that you are being watched by a lot of different people [Geraldine, Interview 2].

Nor did the passage of time lessen her sensitivity to being watched, as this end-of-year vignette reveals:

> Geraldine: …….. every day on my job I had 25 children watching me and when they went home at night I had 50 parents watching what I had done. And I did find that a bit overwhelming and you do feel like they are judging you. [Geraldine, Interview 3].

Living and working in her native community seems to amplify Geraldine's self-consciousness concerning the degree to which she is visible to others:

> Geraldine: ……..if I am going to the local shop I do think what if I bump..... Even if I wanted to go for a run I would never just go from my house because I think if I am running down the road in a tracksuit and all my kids see me, you know, it is something that would be on my mind. Or if I go to the shops

> with my boyfriend I would be thinking I couldn't hold his hand walking around the area because if a child came around the corner, you don't want them going into school talking and giggling [Geraldine, Interview 2].

Also apparent, however, as Geraldine becomes accustomed to being perceived as a teacher in her working class neighbourhood, where being a teacher is noteworthy, is a more comfortable negotiation of various worlds *or circles*:

> Geraldine: I think you kind of get used to it, don't you [being perceived as a teacher], when you see other people's reactions, like I would see my aunt telling people that, 'oh Geraldine is a teacher', and those kinds of moments. But I think you get used to it because you get into the circles, and now most of my friends would be teachers [Geraldine: Interview 1].

The vignettes presented in this sub-section, relating various beginning experiences where boundaries between personal and professional contexts are blurred, are illustrative, on the one hand, of the need to incorporate wider social structures into comprehensive accounts of identity shaping (Hodkinson et al. 2008, p. 32). Accordingly, evidence is furnished in support of the contention that in accounting for the shaping of beginning identities, consideration must be taken of societal influences on beginning teachers, as well as the socio-cultural character of the figured worlds of teaching. On the other hand, these vignettes also illustrate that teacher identity should not be defined completely in terms of professional considerations. Doing so artificially predefines the boundaries of "where a teacher begins and where a teacher ends" (Akkerman and Meijer 2011, p. 317). All that a beginning teacher considers professionally relevant is also part of the whole personal self. The evidence presented in this sub-section illustrates that a beginning teacher is not merely an early-career professional regardless of all that he or she is otherwise; personal histories and current behaviour patterns all inform the shaping of identity. Overarchingly, in drawing attention to the variety of ways beginners begin to cope with increased 'visibility' in

their respective communities, the selected vignettes foster an understanding of the multiplicity of individual beginning teacher lives; lives composed around multiple plotlines and different life spheres (Clandinin et al. 2009).

4.2 Shaping positional identities: the mediating role of 'power relations'

Arising from the micropolitical complexities of early-career practice settings, in this chapter section, I investigate the diverse nature of participants' sense of positional identity in the workplace.

The workplace is a key site where contingent identities are constructed and reconstructed (du Gay 1996 cited in Maguire 2008). Positionality or relationality in workplace settings is concerned with such issues as relations of power, prestige, deference, entitlement, influence and status. A function of the capacity to exercise power and influence in the day-to-day, on-the-ground interactions with others, positional identities refer to views held of oneself vis-à-vis others in a given situation (Holland et al. 1998). As a result, comprehensive accounts of identity shaping must incorporate the positional significance of power differentials and the micro-political nature of the workplace (Hodkinson et al. 2008, p. 32).

In the case of my study, teasing out the shaping of beginning identity demands a complex consideration of the ways participants interact with others within their figured worlds. Of particular importance in the figured world of beginning teaching is the manner in which power is operationalised in the workplace between a beginning teacher and others whose positions are defined relationally vis-à-vis the beginner. Therefore, attention to the dynamics of beginning teachers' interactions with

colleagues is essential to understanding the influence of the socially reproduced sites we know as 'schools' in shaping beginners' identities. In this regard, Ma and Singer-Gabella (2011, p.19) draw attention to the fact that, as beginning teachers grapple with their own developing teacher identities, they do so in relation to a range of others who populate the world of teaching.

Among those who populate the world of teaching, pupils would probably not be the first to spring to mind in relation to understanding the positional identities of beginning teachers. Yet, in my study, pupils play an important part in how two beginning teachers conceive of the physical embodiment of their positional identities. Concerns, expressed by both teachers, centre loosely on how the physical embodiment of their teacherly identities may be compromised in the eyes of their pupils through their adoption of particular positions or roles in the classroom space.

Bernadette's concern [Interview 1] relates to the frequency with which she sits at the work tables of her pupils as they undertake class activities. As this represents a new development, and Bernadette opines that the pupils equate her seating position with a lack of authority, initially she is uneasy in relation to how behaviour management in the class could be compromised. However, Bernadette is sure that, eventually, her rather low slung sitting position will become normalised, thus allowing the connection between visual domination and teacher authority to be broken. Fiona's concern [Interview 1] centres on the connection between the types of role appropriate for a teacher to play in a classroom drama, given their positional identity as an authority figure. Ill-considered casting decisions, which compromise the authority of the teacher in the eyes of the pupils, are to be avoided:

Fiona:…….especially if you are going into a character that is lower in the story, maybe it is a story about a king and a queen and you are a peasant, you can't have any authority.

Interviewer: If you are a peasant?

Fiona: Yes.

Interviewer: That is interesting.

Fiona: It is when you are a lower character it is harder because the kids then treat you like a peasant and it is a complete role reversal.

Interviewer: So the natural character for a teacher is to be a king?

Fiona: Exactly.

Interviewer: Or, more accurately, probably a dictator!

Fiona: I know yes!

These concerns relating to the manner in which the teacher is embodied , or not, as authority figure, expressed by Bernadette and Fiona, resonate with Bourdieu's call that attention be paid to the taken-for-granted or out-of-awareness associations between the important categories of social division and social spaces, body postures, and so on. These connections are especially important for understanding how positional and relational aspects of identity work (Holland et al. 1998, p. 281).

The remainder of this chapter section is organised under six interrelated headings, all directly bearing on the shaping of positional identities in the workplace:

- Class allocation and the shaping of positional identities
- Degree and nature of interactions and the shaping of positional identities
- Narrowly conceived induction and mentoring: shaping positional identities
- Positionality, probation and recapturing the mindset of teaching practice

- Positionality, impression management and performative teaching
- Assessment inspired assistance and the shaping of positional identities.

4.2.1 Class allocation and the shaping of positional identities

Within a school workplace, a number of interrelated components determine the intangible working environment or professional culture surrounding a beginning teacher. For a majority of beginners, interactions occur within predominantly individualistic, veteran-oriented professional cultures (Kardos et al. 2001; Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Johnson and Kardos 2004; Kardos and Johnson 2007; Day and Gu 2010, p. 82). Commonly, the beginning teacher must assume all the roles and responsibilities of the experienced practitioner and, in doing so, is obliged to manifest high levels of self-reliance and individual initiative. At odds with Lave and Wenger's (1991) conceptualisation of beginning experience as being one of progressive movement from the periphery to a position of full participation, the workplace experience of a majority of beginning teachers is one of being "on their own and presumed expert" (Kardos and Johnson 2007, p. 2083). Summarising the lot of most beginners, Feiman-Nemser (2010, p. 25) states that new teachers have two jobs; they have to teach and they have to learn to teach. In this way, many beginning teachers find themselves immersed in complex social relations and sophisticated professional roles within established school communities, whilst at the same time scrambling to make sense of their own experiences and understand what it means to be a teacher (Day and Gu 2010, p. 66; Edwards and Protheroe 2003). Of interest to my study is the degree to which presumptions of this kind, made on behalf of beginners by those in positions of authority within schools, characterise the early-career identity shaping experiences of participants. While acknowledging the agentic

capabilities of participants, this section of my study is concerned with how positional identities (Holland et al. 1998) are shaped within the predominantly veteran-oriented professional cultures of Irish primary schools.

For Olivia, an early portent of what lay ahead was evident from the manner of her introduction to her new workplace. On her first morning, having met her new principal, Olivia *just went out to my room; he had told me where my room was* [Interview 2]. Now sensitised to the plight of newcomers arriving in her wake, as *no one introduces them and it is very……...I always try to say hello because I know how it feels, it is very daunting* [Interview 2]. Equally daunting were Ruth's beginning experiences, which had the effect of her feeling *thrown in at the deep end* [e-mail 1]. The veteran-oriented professional culture in Ruth's school, and the wanton carelessness characterising induction processes, is evident from the moment of Ruth's very arrival at her new workplace: *I arrived on the Monday morning, I didn't even know what time school started and I realised it started at 9:30 and I was there at 8:30* [Interview 1].

The 'deep end' nature of Ruth's beginning was set to continue. Assigned a senior class, which by itself represents a considerable challenge for a beginner, but not briefed with regard to her new responsibilities, Ruth initially feels somewhat overwhelmed: *The first week was like subbing* [substitute or supply teaching] *because I didn't know what books they had, routines etc. so I was waiting for the week to end so I could gather myself* [e-mail 1]. Throughout the course of her initial year, Ruth's senior class, containing *a lot of strong characters* [Interview 1], continue to prove challenging. However, instead of experiencing a supportive response, Ruth feels the

full brunt of the individualistic, unsupportive culture of her school. At the beginning of the school year, in reaction to Ruth's plight in respect of maintaining order in her class, a senior colleague engages in a brusque game of bluff: *She said she wouldn't mind taking them on, no bother to her* [Interview 2]. As it gradually dawns on Ruth that, as a newcomer, she may have been allocated a class deemed too troublesome for allocation to a more experienced member of staff, she reminded that senior colleague of her earlier comment; the senior colleague justified her remark on the basis of having *to say something to you* [Interview 2]. Empty words indeed!

The standoffish, unsupportive stance of Ruth's principal also proves less than helpful. Ruth, however, does not feel less supported than her predecessor in the class. Standoffishness, it seems, is the principal's default setting. Evident from the following extract is how the individualistic nature of school practice - the principal '*took*' the class in Ruth's absence - is used to advantage by the principal, probably unconsciously, to effectively lay the blame for behavioural problems in the class at the feet of a beginning teacher:

> ……I have talked to him a few times about it and he was like, 'oh I took them now and they were grand.' And I was like, you are the principal, they are not going to behave badly for you. And he was like, 'oh I wouldn't be in there every day so I don't know how it goes.' But I would say he was a bit flippant as to how difficult it was really because I'd say the other teacher for the last two years had been complaining, she would talk a lot but he would probably be like, 'ah yeah sure' [Ruth, Interview 3].

Ruth's experience resonates with other "poor fit" cases whereby new teachers were obliged to deal with known behavioural problems (Johnson and Liu 2004).

Being allocated a class, in this instance second class, that more experienced colleagues actively sought to avoid, was also Bernadette's experience. Expert at influencing the decision making of the principal, experienced colleagues had two motivations for their actions: ….*nobody wanted communion* [Interview 2] and the class in question were perceived as being *wild.* In a manner all too common in veteran-oriented cultures, the beginner, it was assumed, was capable of fending for herself:

> Bernadette: I only heard last week, they were like, oh and you have tamed 2nd class. I was like, what? They were wild in 1st class? No one told me this, why didn't you tell me they were wild in 1st class? They were like, 'ah sure we wanted to know how you would get on yourself' [Interview 2].

Undoubtedly, these vignettes illustrate that supporting beginners through cultivation of the idea of 'assisted practice' and the raising of 'horizons of observation' is necessary rather than desirable, as is simultaneously helping schools to develop as 'learning places' through deepening their engagement with pedagogy (Conway et al. 2014; Johnson 2012a, 2012b). It would be erroneous to assume, though, that beginners are cowed by challenging situations. On the contrary, Bernadette viewed the challenge of having to tame a *wild* class, while simultaneously coping with First Communion preparations and the exactitudes of the probationary process, as a *time to shine* [Interview 2] and is *delighted* to undertake the *challenge* involved [Interview 3].

Also allocated second class, Oisín was in an equally challenging situation arising from the mix represented by First Communion preparations and the probationary process. Sacramental considerations aside, the First Communion ceremony is long regarded in Irish Catholic culture as a highpoint of childhood. The public nature of the communion ceremony means that marshalling children through this rite of passage is

a testing undertaking. As a result, and indicative of the individualistic nature of school culture, in many primary schools in Ireland, particular teachers become identified as 'First Communion specialists'. Despite the presence of one such specialist in Oisín's school, a practitioner *who is big into it,* help was less than forthcoming from that quarter. On requesting information regarding the programme of preparation for receipt of communion, 'Do This in Memory', Oisín was instructed *to Google it.* This advice proved less than helpful, as by the time Oisín had reached home he *had forgotten what the programme was called* [Interview 1]. However, having to cope with the vicissitudes of a veteran-oriented culture obliges beginners to be ever resourceful. Luckily, for Oisín, a pupil in his class *who stayed back* [repeated] proved to be an invaluable source of information on matters relating to First Communion. Casting all vestiges of pride aside, while feigning expertise, Oisín mines his source for insider information:

> …….he made his confession last year and he is basically the guy I have been listening to, he is 9 years old and I asked him, I tried to put on an expert face and said, 'all right, what is it that you did last year, can you remember the stuff you did last year?' Testing him, but really asking him what the hell was going on last year. He was like, 'oh yeah we did a few songs, we just said our prayers and that was it.' I was like, phew [Oisín, Interview 2].

As an insight into a veteran-oriented professional culture in action, the above vignette helps prove the veracity of the comic utterance, 'Many a true word is spoken in jest'!

4.2.2 Degree and nature of interactions and the shaping of positional identities

In general, beginners felt supported and encouraged by their experienced colleagues. However, as with their post-primary equivalents (Gilleece et al. 2009), it is the nature of interactions with colleagues that furnish key insights into the positional identities of beginners. While ostensibly collegial, when scrutinised more closely, isolated,

individualistic practice is very much the norm. For example, the manner in which additional supports for pupils with special educational needs is organised in schools is illustrative of the lack of any meaningful forms of collaborative practice between beginners and their more senior colleagues, who, invariably, serve as Learning Support teachers in schools. By way of background information, as teaching is a cultural activity (Stigler and Hiebert 1999), traditionally in primary schools in Ireland, children who are assessed as needing additional learning support are withdrawn from the mainstream classroom by a Learning Support teacher to receive that support. Invariably, the Learning Support teacher is also vastly experienced as a mainstream class teacher. To ensure that the provision of additional support dovetails with class work to the greatest degree possible, good practice guidelines (DES 2000, 2007) advocate high levels of collaboration between Learning Support teachers and mainstream class teachers. However, for a number of reasons, not least in relation to role conceptualisation, a different reality prevails in schools (Travers 2006, p. 165; Ware et al. 2011, p. 3). Of particular interest to my study, therefore, is how beginners are positioned vis-à-vis their more experienced colleagues in the transaction of special educational needs provision.

The learning support scenario prevailing in Bernadette's second class is typical of practice throughout the primary school system; six pupils are withdrawn in different combinations at various times of the school day by three different Learning Support teachers. Contact between Bernadette and her three Learning Support colleagues, calculated to facilitate the implementation of integrated learning experiences for the pupils being withdrawn from class, are non-existent. Instead, when contact is initiated, it is frequently motivated by the self-interest of various parties. Bernadette,

for instance, decided to initiate contact with her Learning Support colleagues in advance of parent-teacher meetings. It would seem that her motivation to act agentically in this way arose more from professional self-interest than from a genuine desire to monitor pupil progress:

> Interviewer: And do you know what is being done with the children when they are out with the other [Learning Support] teachers?
>
> Bernadette: No. I have seen samples of the work like coming up to the parent teacher meetings I asked for samples of their work [Interview 2].

On other occasions, contacts are initiated when Learning Support teachers make representations on behalf of pupils who desire that timetable slots be slightly modified. Of interest here is that cursory contacts of this kind constitute Bernadette's understanding of collaborative practice:

> Interviewer: And do they [Learning Support teachers] ever ask you to reinforce or to generalise, in your class, something that they are teaching out in the withdrawal setting?
>
> Bernadette: Not really no.
>
> Interviewer: You are really operating very much separate from each other.
>
> Bernadette: Yes but there would have been a few times where one of them might have called me to the door and just said, look he is really worried that he is going to miss out on things that are happening after lunch [in Bernadette's mainstream classroom], do you mind if I take him for an hour tomorrow morning?
>
> Interviewer: At a different time?
>
> Bernadette: Yes and I'd be like no problem at all [Interview 2].

While immediate acquiescence, on Bernadette's part, to a request of this kind is most likely a function of her co-operative disposition, positionally her promptness could also be a function of power differentials in the workplace. No such ambiguity, however, surrounds the positionality inherent in the following exchange, where

Bernadette, the newcomer, defers to her more experienced colleagues, trusting them to do *the right thing.*

> Interviewer: So would you say that you are basically operating very much solo from them, from those three [Learning Support] teachers?
>
> Bernadette: Well I presume that they kind of, I mean they have been there for years and they know the structure and I trust them that whatever they are doing I am sure it is the right thing [Interview 2].

Much like Bernadette, Niall is also unsure as to the nature of the work being undertaken by the three Learning Support teachers who withdraw pupils from his class. Positionally, while he wishes that a more communicative culture existed in his school, he, too, is willing to trust his more experienced colleagues: *like I am not fully sure what the teachers do with the children when they take them out but I am sure they are doing a good job but I am not sure what they are doing* [Niall, Interview 2].

While willing to place trust in her colleagues, the manner in which the provision of learning support is organised in her school is problematic for Bernadette, and for the pupils involved, from a timetabling viewpoint. The fragmented nature of the learning support service - three different teachers withdraw different pupils in different combinations from Bernadette's class during different time periods in the course of the school day - means that the alignment of timetables is well neigh impossible, ensuring that some aspects of practice are actually in disrepute. At the outset of the year, when her mild protestation is ignored by her more senior colleagues, positionally, Bernadette is unable to give effect to a timetabling realignment and so has to accept an unsatisfactory situation:

> Bernadette: Like they are missing out on maths when they are going down [to the withdrawal setting] for English reading, I know that yes.

> Interviewer: So basically they are missing out on maths and they are doing English reading down there but they are in your class when you are doing English. So they are getting two doses of English and no maths?
>
> Bernadette: Yes.
>
> Interviewer: That is problematic? Or is it?
>
> Bernadette: That is the way it is. I did say it at the beginning [to senior colleagues in learning support positions] and then I just kind of let it go [Interview 2].

Other beginners, also dissatisfied with the fragmented nature of learning support provision in their schools, like Bernadette, accept the situation as *the way it is*, a fait accompli: *it was kind of in place* [Niall, Interview 2]; *…it is just the way it was when I came in….* [Geraldine, Interview 2];*…I know I was supposed to be the main accountable person for him* [pupil in receipt of additional supports] *but it* [Individual Education Plan] *was just basically sent to me via e-mail and that was it* [Ruth, Interview 2]. Most likely, realising that, positionally, they are unable to effect changes, beginners learn to live with unsatisfactory arrangements in the workplace.

4.2.3 Narrowly conceived induction and mentoring: shaping positional identities

Positionality is also influential in determining how the induction and mentoring of beginning teachers is conceived of and transacted in schools. In this respect, the most recent initiatives surrounding the induction and mentoring of beginning teachers in the primary school sector are outlined in both Circular 0029/2012 (DES 2012c) and in the proposed *Droichead* pilot initiative (Teaching Council 2013). An emphasis on collaborative practice, contained in these policy documents, has the potential to clash with long-established, individualistic work practices that have traditionally defined school settings in Ireland (OECD 1991). Therefore, arising from the organisational

capture of policy principals within veteran-oriented school cultures, contradictions (Engeström 2001) attach to the induction and mentoring of beginning teachers, resulting in discontinuities between stated policy (DES 2012c) and enacted practice. As a result, while, encouragingly, NIPT-facilitated 'relational' mentoring practices benefit beginners, these practices enjoy, at best, a tentative foothold in Irish schools (O'Doherty and Deegan 2009, p. 31).

In contrast to student teachers, who become 'invisible' as learners during their teaching practice placement (Long et al. 2012), in general the beginning teachers participating in my study were comfortable being conceived of as learners within their school communities. Additionally, the temporary employment status of particular participants did not impede their willingness to be visible as learners. Guided by a perception of the beginning teacher as not solitary but, instead, part of a wider system of relationships (Smagorinsky et al. 2004, p. 9), many participants were open-minded about seeking help from others, even when an assigned mentor had withdrawn from the scene: *different people* [mentors] *have different areas of expertise* [Bernadette, Interview 3]. Indeed, Bernadette's willingness to openly solicit help from her colleagues was typical of the attitude of most participants: *Well I was open about it, lads I don't have a clue* [Interview 2]. And Bernadette envisions that her visibility as a learner will continue into the future: *…next year…. I would definitely use the, I am the youngest teacher here with the least experience card; I need help here, definitely* [Interview 3]. Resonating with Newberry's view that beginning teachers are quite selective about whom to turn to (1977 cited in Feiman-Nemser 1983), frustrated at being obliged to maintain regular contact with her assigned mentor, Bernadette

decides *after a few weeks* to elicit help from a range of colleagues according to their perceived expertise:

> ……like Jim (pseudonym), oh I will ask him about PE, he will be good at that and I will go up to someone else for the art. And the Holy Communion, I will ask her, she had Holy Communion last year so she is the best one to go for there [Interview 2].

No doubt, a function of their feeling affirmed by her solicitations, encouragingly, though not surprisingly, Bernadette's colleagues responded generously and with good humour: *when I move it around they nearly half laugh, oh is it me this time, it must be the Holy Communion* [Interview 2]. However, one has to acknowledge that, as with beginning teachers studied by Fuller et al. (2005), offers of support on the part of experienced colleagues tend to be reactive rather than proactive.

While not as effusively direct as Bernadette in declaring their learning needs, most participants were equally willing to proactively seek guidance from their colleagues. Notable exceptions aside - Olivia, for whom *there is no one you can go to* [Interview 1], remains loath to broach the issue with her principal [Interview 2], and Danielle *has never had any mentoring* [Interview 1] - it seems that while beginners are 'presumed expert', they are not entirely 'on their own'. Yet, crucially, within the predominantly veteran-oriented professional cultures of Irish schools, a narrow rather than a robustly expansive view of mentoring support prevails. However, positionally, far from being deliberately disadvantaged by senior colleagues because of their newcomer status, beginners, it would appear, are complicit in how mentoring is conceived of in exceedingly narrow terms.

From the outset of their beginning year, a majority of participants were assigned a mentor by the school principal. Some assigned mentors had received training from the NIPT, others not. Overall, the highly individualistic nature of both formal and informal mentoring processes in Irish primary schools, reflect mentoring culture elsewhere. Feiman-Nemser (2001, p. 1049; 2010, p. 24) correctly warns that, conceived and transacted within individualistically orientated school cultures, mentoring may inadvertently reinforce an individualistic orientation towards teaching and learning to teach. Accordingly, indicative of their shared narrow view of mentoring, the attitude of a majority of beginners and mentors towards the process is best described as relaxed: *Very casual, just a chat* [Geraldine, Interview 3]; *Very casual, very informal, if I wanted her* [assigned mentor] *she was there* [Bernadette, Interview 3]. Because it suited his own *personality*, Liam, too, welcomed the non-invasive approach of his assigned mentor:……*I do prefer to work a bit more by myself……I am not very good if I have somebody telling me that I should try these five strategies, that that is the way they do it* [Liam, Interview 3]. In Niall's case, meetings with his mentor soon petered out: *I suppose they just stopped, we had two or three and we had no more to talk about then* [Interview 2]. Secure in the knowledge that he could access help informally from his principal or any of his colleagues, the cessation of formal mentoring sessions was a development viewed with some relief by Liam: *it is not like I wish these meetings would continue so I could bring up my own issues* [Interview 2].

Equally, Ruth, on the solitary occasion during the 2010-2011school-year that she arranged to visit her mentor's classroom to observe a lesson, explained that she *just completely forgot and I just went and watched her at the last minute* [Interview 3].

Afterwards, neither Ruth nor her assigned mentor saw the need to discuss the session further: ……..*it was more like, well that is done now……just to have it done really because we were supposed to* [Interview 3]. Apart from the obligatory nature of the occasion, the lack of desire on Ruth's part to engage in any form of post observation review may stem from *the fact that she* [the mentor] *was just the other 5th class teacher……..I don't think it would have made a difference if she was my mentor or not* [Interview 3]. While a willingness to be mentored, on the part of the beginning teacher, is an important prerequisite for successful mentoring (Hobson et al. 2009; Roehriga et al. 2008), it would appear that, conceived of narrowly, it is more likely that beginners will be underwhelmed by the mentoring process. Equally, the prevailing narrow conceptualisation of mentoring prevents mentor teachers from playing a significant role in new teacher learning (Wang and Odell 2002) and contributes to them not taking the role seriously (Eraut 2007, p. 413). Thus, the propensity among beginners and experienced colleagues of mutually reinforcing their independent identities via narrowly conceived and transacted mentoring practices, resonates with the appetite for 'invisibility' among both student teachers and, by implication, their school hosts, in preference to the adoption of a 'learning' persona in teaching practice settings (Long et al. 2012; Conway et al. 2014).

Limited by structural and cultural arrangements (Conway et al. 2014), as currently narrowly conceived, mentoring processes focus on easing the beginner's entry into teaching, helping with immediate questions and uncertainties. Mentors expect to provide and beginners expect to receive emotional support, technical assistance, and guidance about local customs, arrangements and policies. Neither sees mentoring as a substantial and meaningful influence on beginner's learning to teach (Norman and

Feiman-Nemser 2005; Bullough et al. 2008, p. 1848): *The minute next to the dishwasher will do. I don't have that much to say for an hour on a Thursday evening after school* [Bernadette, Interview 2]; *No I don't think she* [mentor] *is up-skilling me. I think she is just somebody there that I can go to that de-stresses me when I need to be de-stressed. As I say there is no agenda, it is not that this week we are working on..... it is almost like counselling really* [Geraldine, Interview 2]; *If I was upset about something she made me feel better about it…….in some ways survival skills as in giving me tips to deal with things* [Geraldine, Interview 3]. Before the process petered out, Niall's three mentoring sessions also centred on the provision of *basic survivor skills for the classroom* [Niall, Interview 2] ……. *things like the class library and having a library log where the children write in the book they are reading or have read and the date and all that* [Niall, Interview 3]. In focusing on the transactional aspects of school life (Gilleece et al. 2009), mentoring sessions, in Liam's school, are similarly conceived: *It hasn't gone deeply into the teaching as such, a lot of it was planning, some day-to-day routines ……..Say if something new came up like they might be going swimming or something like that and the whole rigmarole of what the procedures would be* [Interview 2].

Yet, a tension (Haggarty and Postlethwaite 2009) or dilemma (Flores 2010) can arise between the desire for autonomy and solitude (Bullough et al 2004, p. 386) while simultaneously feeling a need for support. Reflective of this view, despite her general acceptance of a narrow conceptualisation of mentoring, Geraldine, exceptionally, wishes that mentoring processes would engage more expansively with teaching and learning. While benefiting from a mixture of formal and informal mentoring help, *I have always had someone to go to* [Interview 2], in these engagements, Geraldine has

confined herself to asking *pressing* questions. However, Geraldine admits that a failure to broach the more ambitious aspects of pedagogy *plays on her mind:*

> …….like I would love to say, 'tell me exactly how you structure your lessons, how you stick to the time, how you balance your subjects, whether you really meet all the hours in the curriculum that you are meant to' [Geraldine, Interview 2].

Geraldine's reluctance to engage more deeply with colleagues is motivated by her desire not to disturb the assumptions she feels those colleagues have made about her level of expertise (Ulvik et al. 2009): *I tend not to* [ask questions] *because I just think it will be assumed that I am doing it right* [Interview 2]. In this respect, unlike many of her beginning colleagues, Geraldine is somewhat reluctant to be thought of as a learner, *I don't want people to think that I don't know what I am doing* [Interview 2]. Yet, conflicted, she would *love to ask and be sure…….how other teachers manage it. Because I know they must be so much more laid back* [Interview 2]. Realising that the levels of intensity demanded by probationary-related processes is unsustainable over the long-term, Geraldine wonders if, in succeeding in being *more laid back*, her colleagues *just get quicker at it or they just have a different way of doing it* [Interview 2]. Lack of opportunity to observe her colleagues in their classrooms meant that Geraldine continued to engage in speculation throughout her beginning year.

Indicative of the diverse and variable nature of mentoring processes (Anthony et al. 2011, p. 865), while initially appreciate of mentoring help, by mid-year, Fiona deemed the expansively proactive model of mentoring initiated in her school to be overwhelming:

> At this point I think it is a bit much…… we [three beginners in the school] have had the principal in to us ……, we have had the mentor into us….. We have seen her teach, she has seen us teach, we have seen other

> teachers teach……..and still it is a constant ‘oh I am going to be into you again’ [Fiona, Interview 2].

However, Fiona’s cooling attitude was due to the manner in which mentoring help in her school was too passively observational on the parts of both beginners and mentors and, consequently, insufficiently participative in terms of co-teaching arrangements between both parties. Additionally, mentoring efforts related too closely to the performative demands of the probationary process. Fiona’s reaction resonates with claims that it is how induction and mentoring are conceived of and transacted that is all important. Existing within a set of nested contexts, general policies advocating, even mandating, support for beginning teachers, while helpful, are not sufficient (Carver and Feiman-Nemser 2009, p. 323; Kardos and Johnson 2010, p. 41).

Narrowly conceived within veteran-oriented school cultures, the induction and mentoring of the beginners partaking in my study have been inhibited by what Cole refers to as the ‘reification of a cultural past in the cultural present’ (Cole 1995 cited in Edwards and Protheroe 2003, p. 238). As a result, the particular and often considerable strengths of senior colleagues are largely unavailable to beginners. We need to ask, as Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005) do, what kind of induction and mentoring do we desire and what sorts of outcomes do we seek? The mere presence of a mentor is not enough. Placing the whole responsibility for induction in the hands of a mentor ignores the limits of mentoring and the impact of working conditions on the process (Achinstein 2006; Sundli 2007). The impact of mentoring not only depends on appropriate matches, time, and mentor knowledge and skill, but also on the expectations that mentors and beginners hold for one another and what they actually do together. An expansive view of mentoring promises more than narrowly conceived conceptualisations of mentoring currently do. Linked to a vision of good

teaching and a developmental view of learning to teach, expansive mentoring still responds to new teachers' transactional needs while helping them move their learning forward.

Mentors who view their work in robustly expansive educational terms have a clear idea of the kind of teaching they want to foster - the promotion of a shared sense of responsibility for the meaningful and effective learning on the part of all students - while viewing both themselves and their mentees as 'learners'. In schools that embrace a school wide "integrated professional culture" (Kardos and Johnson 2007, p. 4), involving a two-way interaction about teaching and learning among beginners and experienced teachers, the desired policy outcomes of induction and mentoring are more likely to be achieved (Johnson 2012a, 2012b). It demands the implementation of a worked-out view of participatory learning that draws on mentors' strengths to enrich the learning experiences of beginners (Edwards and Protheroe 2003, p. 229). In the context of Irish primary schooling, ensuring that these benefits accrue to beginning teachers, necessities a fundamental reform of how induction and mentoring are conceived of and transacted in schools.

4.2.4 Positionality, probation and recapturing the mindset of teaching practice

For the beginning teachers partaking in my study, a preeminent workplace demand related to the primarily evaluative probationary process. Beginners were required to complete the process satisfactorily by exhibiting professional competency to achieve full registration by the Teaching Council. With respect to the 2010/11 school-year, which corresponds with the fieldwork phase of my study, Circular 0058/2010 (DES

2010) outlines the procedures for the evaluation of probationary teachers' professional competence. Operated by the Inspectorate of the DES, the probation process informs the decisions of the Teaching Council regarding the registration of primary teachers. To complete the probationary process satisfactorily, the beginning teacher must demonstrate professional competence while undertaking a minimum period of satisfactory service, equating to 170 school days, from the date of first appointment to a post recognised for probationary purposes in a primary school. [The equivalent minimum service obligation for the 2012/13 school year equates to a reduced period of 100 school days (DES 2012c)]. During this period of service, a member of the Inspectorate inspects the work of the teacher during two unannounced inspection visits. In practice, these inspection visits invariably occur during the second half of the school-year. During the inspection visits, the inspector evaluates the teacher's effectiveness in a classroom environment and in teaching curriculum areas and subjects as outlined in the Primary School Curriculum (DES 1999).

The criteria used in the evaluation of the teacher's work are listed under four main headings in an appendix attached to Circular 0058/2010: namely, planning, preparation and recording of progress; classroom management and organisation; quality of teaching across curriculum areas; and, quality of pupils' learning in curriculum areas (DES 2010). As the inspector provides advice and oral feedback to the beginning teacher during each visit, Circular 0058/2010 advises that "it is desirable for the principal (or another fully registered teacher nominated by the principal) to be present when the oral feedback is provided to the newly qualified teacher" (DES 2010, pp. 5-6). Yet, in her desire for autonomy and solitude (Bullough et al 2004, p. 386) or perhaps because of less-than-adequate levels of communication

among parties, when the provision of feedback was supplied to Olivia in this manner, she wondered if her dissatisfaction at having to receive feedback in the presence of her principal and a beginning colleague equated to *a form of weakness or something* [Interview 2]. While probably not symptomatic of *weakness*, Olivia's dissatisfaction at least proves that collaborative practice is, frequently, fraught with difficulty and misunderstanding (Achinstein 2002, 2006).

Following the two inspection visits, the Inspectorate determines the rating to be applied to the teacher's work; namely, has demonstrated satisfactory professional competence; requires a further period to develop and demonstrate professional competence; has not demonstrated satisfactory professional competence. While teachers are provided with written confirmation of their rating, in a departure from past practice, a written report is not furnished; an unwelcomed development in Olivia's eyes: *you have nothing to show for yourself, you have no report* [Interview 2]. Olivia's understandable reaction demonstrates the powerful influence reified aspects of practice, not least the production and receipt of artefacts of various kinds, have on the shaping of identity.

Sociocultural emphases on the social formation of mind remind us how important is the learning that occurs in action with the reifications of the culture for the shaping of future interpretations and actions (Wertsch et al. 1995 cited in Edwards and Protheroe 2003, p. 239). Reification refers to the artefacts or tools, both material and conceptual, which, over time, come to serve as 'guides to action' in a work setting (Hall et al. 2012, p. 2). Reifications, important in forming the minds or shaping the identities of

the beginning teachers in my study, include, for instance, curriculum handbooks, planning files and lesson plans geared at curriculum delivery. Participation, on the other hand, refers to the manner in which an individual beginning teacher agentically chooses when and how to apply or when and how to ignore reified elements in the workplace. Inevitably and unavoidably in a dualistic relation, reification and participation have to be considered in tandem. Importantly, the balance or distribution in the relationship between reification and participation significantly influences the shaping of identity. The balance needs to be right, if too much reliance is on one at the expense of the other, the shaping of identity becomes compromised (Hall et al. 2012, p. 2). As a relational imbalance compromises the shaping of positional identity, my study seeks to establish if data derived in the field attest to the existence of a relational imbalance between reified practices associated with long-established, probationary processes and agentic participation on the part of beginning participants.

Establishing coherent links between the experiences of initial teacher education and the requirements of school-based workplaces is, frequently, problematic for beginning teachers. Fiona, for instance, draws attention to differences between *training college and reality* [e-mail 1] and *real life* [Interview 1]; Danielle refers to the challenge of bridging her *very theoretical* college course and her *extremely practical job* as a beginning teacher [Interview 1]. Given liminal challenges of this kind, that beginners would view the intense performativity of teaching practice as the best possible preparation for a successful negotiation of the probationary process, attests not only to the performative nature of probation but also to the degree to which beginners have internalised performative perspectives during the period of their initial teacher education (McNamara et al. 2002). Having internalised the performative intensity of

teaching practice during initial teacher education, first-year beginning teachers continue to shape their view of being a teacher within the performative culture of the probationary system. In this respect, both the tangible and intangible reifications of teaching practice are valued for their potential contribution to the probationary effort.

Aside from Oisín's view that *the folder is a huge thing* [Interview 1], other tangible reifications deemed useful include *preparation and short term planning* [Liam, Interview 3] and *weekly schemes and lesson plans* [Fiona, e-mail 1]. Less tangibly, most beginners studied share the view that the probationary year is *like an extended teaching practice* [Niall, Interview 3] and provides *the scope of how you need to act in front of a Dip* [probation] *inspector* [Ruth, Interview 3]. Liam states that *recapturing the mind set of teaching practice* helps him to attain the motivation, necessary to successfully undertake the probationary process: *just to have that element of pressure knowing that you have to perform the first year rather than coming into it complacently……it got me more focused on the planning and it definitely gave me the motivation. Even the times I was kind of lagging ……just to keep on* [Interview 3].

Danielle's pride in surviving the performative exactitudes of the probationary process is readily evident:

> ……..I think it [probation] actually kicks people into place. You see because I am new I don't find it that difficult, it isn't any skin off my nose to sit down and create notes because I know what I am doing, not that I am trying to say I am big headed but I know where to find out what they [inspectors] want to see and what they want laid out for them and I don't see it as a very big deal. I see it as part of the job, it is a pain, I won't deny that, but it is part of the job and it is good for you because it means that the whole job and everyone is working, hopefully, around the same level and it is as effective as it can be [Danielle, Interview 3].

Despite her bravado, and her faith in the probationary process being *good for you* and *as effective as it can be,* the conflicted nature of Danielle's feelings on probation are also apparent. Noteworthy, in light of all the positives outlined, is Danielle's depiction of probation as *a pain,* which resonates with the views of many other beginners, notably Ruth, who dismisses probationary-related planning processes as *too much needless paperwork that ends up turning to copy and paste by the end because you are just sick of it* [Ruth, Interview 3]. The performative nature of probation also causes Danielle to feel as anxious as other beginners in the face of an impending inspectorial visit to her classroom. Characteristically, though, Danielle has a retort to hand:

> …….. it is a stranger coming in and I think nearly everyone has something that they might neglect slightly and they are terrified that one little thing will be found out [by an inspector], oh you haven't done drama for three weeks. Sorry but I have been trying to do the maths for three weeks instead [Danielle, Interview 3].

Nonetheless, Danielle, in being terrified that *one little thing will be found out* attests to the discontinuous, snapshot, high stakes nature of the inspectorial regime. Equally, *the whole* [high stakes] *nature of it* causes Geraldine to feel continuously anxious: *like every day that you go in, you never know if that is the day…….my biggest fear was that he* [inspector] *might come in on a bad day. It might be a bad day for him, a bad day for the kids; maybe it wasn't my best lesson and I just felt, would whatever he saw reflect the work I had done?* [Geraldine, Interview 3]. In guarding against *things not going well on the day*, Ruth advises that at least having *your planning right* acts as an insurance policy: *I think if you do have your notes you are 50% of the way there, 70%* [Ruth, Interview 3]. This advice, however, equates to a variation of the dominant script, rather than a change of script.

Overall, the beginners in my study attest that in respect of probation, the relationship between the reified aspects of the process and agentic participation on the part of beginners is unbalanced (Hall et al. 2012, p. 2). Beginner preoccupation with the exactitudes of a performative probationary regime is significantly compromising the shaping of early-career identities in Irish primary schools. This theme is elaborated upon in the next subsection.

4.2.5 Positionality, impression management and performative teaching

As the probationary year is largely seen in terms of *an act that you are putting on* [Olivia, Interview 3], collaborative practices are sidelined and the individualism, characteristic of a non-collaborative school culture, is reinforced. The beginning teacher is not the only protagonist who deems that the probationary process is transacted in this fashion. For instance, when Olivia offers an inspector an opportunity to view her partake, with colleagues, in a collaborative practice called 'station teaching', the offer is politely sidelined. Instead, isolated practice is favoured for the inspectorial visit, the rationale being that beginner 'competency' is easier to detect in isolated pedagogic practice:

> Olivia: …….. I said to my inspector when he came the last time, I said, 'three afternoons a week I have station teaching, I would love for you to see that actually it is working very well.' And he said, 'oh right well I could just see that for a little bit but I would want to see...' He wasn't particularly interested in seeing that maybe because it is not just me. So he said he will look at it but he would still have to see….. I know he would be under pressure to see me doing……
>
> Interviewer: He insisted on seeing you in isolation.
>
> Olivia: Yes, it is like teaching practice.

Olivia, though, is unusual in offering to showcase her adventurous collaborative practice for the inspector. Resonating with Goffman's (1959) 'dramaturgical model of

social life' and Shipman's notion of 'impression management' (1967a cited in Zeichner and Tabachnick 1981), most beginners, in their desire to put their 'best foot forward' in a performative environment, try to reduce the learning or cognitive demand in activities, and the consequent risk of failure. Concentrating on a teaching session as individual performance requires ignoring risky, responsive forms of teaching. Faced with an inspectorial visit, a beginner is more likely to close down on complexity than seek it when interpreting classroom life (Edwards and Protheroe 2003, p. 231). An inspectorial context leads beginners to present competent performances of teaching, mainly efficient curriculum delivery, rather than risky attempts at interactively and responsively supporting pupil learning. Performativity, therefore, short-circuits or constrains the range of learning affordances potentially available to beginners. In the restricted circumstances of a probationary regime, inspections can become little more than empty rituals, as evidenced by Danielle's view that *he* [inspector] *was just there ticking boxes and making sure that I met a certain criteria* [Interview 3].

Within the confines of efficient curriculum delivery, owing to 'local knowledge' of differing expectations among individual members of the inspectorate, the probationary-related aversion to risk and responsiveness is amplified among beginners by a preoccupation to engage in 'show teaching', mostly by attending to the 'likes' and avoiding the 'dislikes' of particular inspectors: …..*different inspectors like different things, don't like different things, want to see different things* [Niall, Interview 2]; *all the different inspectors are a little bit subjective, you know* [Ruth, Interview 3]. Interestingly, and indicative of a policy - practice disjuncture, beginners did not acknowledge a list of performance criteria, outlined in an appendix attached to

Circular 058/2010 (DES2010), as important in informing their preparation and practice, nor did participants mention that their attention was drawn to this set of criteria by members of the Inspectorate!

Generally, through a combination of gleaning information from colleagues and from remaining alert to other figured world related clues, each beginner formed an opinion as to the 'form' of the particular inspector assigned to their case. As a result, beginners were well prepared for inspection: *He* [inspector] *likes notes and organisation but I suppose judging by his name, it was as Gaeilge* [in a Gaelic format], *so I was sure he likes the Gaeilge, you know* [Oisín, Interview 3]; ….. *he* [inspector] *liked a bit of Gaeilge* [Fiona, Interview 3]; ……*she* [inspector] *was just very much about taking everything directly from the curriculum* [Ruth, Interview 3]. Noteworthy is how self aware beginners are with regard to how their actions are determined by the inspectorial regime surrounding the probationary process: ……. *I know I am just pandering to what he wants, another inspector could have wanted something else* [Olivia: Interview 2]…….:*when I was planning my lessons, I always had at the back of my mind if he* [inspector] *was there, what would he like to see in the lesson?* [Geraldine, Interview 3]. Also noteworthy, and indicative of how adventurous forms of practice can become marginalised, is the extent to which an evaluative inspection regime can influence the minute details of classroom practice: ……. *my inspector, in particular, loved neatness, he was a man for having the copies straight and organising the classroom well* [Fiona, Interview 3]. In Oisín's case, cognisant that outcomes are determined *on the day,* paying attention to detail centred on the micro elements of Irish grammar, traditionally important within the figured world of primary schooling in Ireland:

> Oisín:……...the inspector did come in and he asked them a question as Gaeilge and they knew the answer to it and it just so happened that I covered that particular question which happened to be 'conas atá sibh?', rather than 'conas atá tú?'
>
> Interviewer: And they [pupils] knew that?
>
> Oisín: Yes, I had this feeling that he would say, 'conas atá sibh?' And I thought it might look better if they knew the response to ‘sibh’ [plural format] rather than ‘tú’ {singular format]. But that was just on the day [Interview 2].

Aside from serving his more immediate probationary related needs, Oisín’s attending to the specifics of Irish grammar is also a throwback to a previous era in primary schooling in Ireland. After the foundation of the Irish state, in the early 1920’s, primary teachers were charged with delivering a principal policy objective of the new administration; the restoration of the Irish language to common daily usage in society (Deegan 2012, p. 182). For decades afterwards**,** on their exclusively evaluative visits to primary schools, the archetypal Cigirí Scoile [School Inspectors], who were charged with enforcing the language restoration policy, would engage pupils in conversational Irish as a way of checking on the work of the teacher (Coolahan 2005, p. 176). As a result, the inculcation of grammatical accuracy, solely for performative purposes, became singularly important in the figured world of the primary teacher. Not doing so risked, if not humiliation, at least the possibility of being subjected to a considerable measure of professional discomfort. In an era where, perhaps, the insistence on grammatical accuracy in Irish is not as rigorous, Oisín’s approach, possibly a function of an apprenticeship of observation served during his own schooling, lends credence to Deegan’s view that a residual focus on gaelicisation is still a feature of primary schooling in Ireland (2012, p. 182). Wherever lie the origins of his preoccupation with grammatical accuracy for performative purposes, Oisín’s

probationary practice, as with a majority of participants in my study, is orientated more towards efficient curriculum delivery than responsive and adventurous pedagogy.

Of the nine beginning participants, only Danielle and Fiona displayed any form of adventurous pedagogy in the presence of an inspector. Of the two, only Fiona's practice can be considered to be genuinely adventurous. Involving, literally, a sleight of hand, Danielle's approach mirrored the commonly practised student teaching ploy of the 'floating lesson'. Rather than genuinely attempting to engage in ambitious forms of practice, Danielle, to mix some metaphors, saved the best wine for the big occasion:

> Interviewer: What about when the inspector came to your room, were you less than ambitious in what you taught? In other words did you play safe in terms of what you planned for that day rather than sort of do something that was more complicated?
>
> Danielle: Well I had a floating daily plan which I had there which was my excellent day and I had everything ready to go for it, so when I heard that he was downstairs, out came the normal every day what teachers do plan, and in with my fantastic plan. And I had my class bribed within an inch of their lives; if you are really good for our visitor then we can have a party after he is gone and a full day of art and PE. So when he arrived, yes I did have the amazing day where I had integration gone wild. My orientation which had mapping and geography with maps revision and their out door activities was PE as well. So I had everything on the go [Interview 3].

Danielle's stage managing of her probationary inspection visit is indicative of the degree to which its attendant performativity is in disrepute. Additionally, the manner, in which the pupils almost knowingly partook in the charade, enhances the view that one off probationary occasions, lacking in any sense of pedagogical meaningfulness, have little to contribute to contemporary conceptualisations of teacher learning. Interestingly, awareness among pupils of the performative pressures placed on their

teachers, had implications for the positional identity of those teachers, though, as with all other aspects of beginning practice, great variability, primarily a function of pupil age and school type, was evident. Oisín's second class thought that it was they and not their teacher who was being assessed [Interview 3]. Yet, while still, age-appropriately, of an innocent disposition, they had already internalised the probationary-related emphasis on summative assessment. Fiona's sixth class pupils, by now well versed in the demands of performative occasions, *were concerned about how you looked in front of the inspector so they were going to be as good as gold* [Interview 1]. Danielle's fifth class, equally well versed in relation to the reified elements of a performative culture, found her explanation as to the identity of a classroom visitor, less than convincing!

> Danielle: Oh they knew, I didn't want to upset them or make them nervous so I'd say, 'well we have a visitor coming.' And then one of them would shout out, 'you mean an Inspector?' ' No a visitor.' 'Yes he is an Inspector, are you only new teaching?' ' He is a visitor, ok?' 'Is he the fellow that was down there who is writing loads about you teacher?'

Geraldine also senses that the knowingness of her fifth class pupils, and her own vulnerability on the occasion of a probationary inspection, causes her to cede ground, to loose *power,* thus impacting on her positional identity:

> Geraldine:……I felt that while the children saw me as the one teaching and doing the assessing, it was also strange that then they watched me being assessed. I found that a very strange relationship because of the age they were at, while they still thought the inspector was there to see them; they knew he was watching me as well. Like they would almost, if something was going well they'd give me the thumbs up. So I think that was a strange feeling. I lost some of my power almost while it was happening.
>
> Interviewer: That is very interesting; they saw that you were vulnerable in the moment too.
>
> Geraldine: Exactly and they knew that I was going to feedback afterwards.

> Interviewer: Do you think they had a sense that they held your fate in their hands in terms of their own behaviour?
>
> Geraldine: I think they did know that they had to help me out.
>
> Interviewer: That is a very interesting one because the senior pupils will know.
>
> Geraldine: Yes and there was no point in lying to them about it, I just told them that he was there to see how we were doing together, how much ye were learning and how much I was teaching. Because there was no point in saying they were in a competition to be the best class in Ireland, which some of my friends were able to do with the younger kids.

Of all nine participants, aside from Olivia's unsuccessful offer to engage in 'station teaching', only Fiona's agentic, participative approach, on the occasion of her probationary inspection, contained the expansive adventurousness which should serve as an exemplar for beginning practice in the future:

> Fiona:……I kind of chanced things in that for my English lesson it was a strategy [group work] that I only used once before and it didn't work exceptionally well and I said I would try it again but it worked well that time because they were more familiar with it.
>
> Interviewer: You said you would try it again when he [inspector] was there?
>
> Fiona: When he was there.
>
> Interviewer: Even though the first time you had done it, it wasn't great in your estimation. I am sure it was, but in your estimation... and you still went back there in a kind of a hire wire act.
>
> Fiona: Yes because even at that it was something that was recommended to us in one of the induction days but he praised me for it in the end even saying that that was a particular style they were trying to encourage teachers to do [Interview 3].

Though, as presently envisaged, from the beginning of the 2015/16 school year, the Inspectorate will cease to be involved in the probation of primary teachers (Teaching Council 2013), the response of Fiona's inspector to her adventurous pedagogic

approach is encouraging, as is Fiona's acknowledgement that her actions were guided by advice received at an NIPT workshop session. For in this one vignette, much that could usefully inform how probation is conceived of and transacted in the future, is evident. To develop integrated professional cultures in schools, necessary to support beginning teachers as they engage in responsive and ambitious forms of practice (Johnson 2012a, 2012b), school principals, who, from September 2015, will be obliged to facilitate the probation of newly qualified teachers, and, from September 2013, are invited to do so voluntarily, as part of a pilot initiative (Teaching Council 2013), have a crucial role to play in helping these developments come into being; all the while working in a mutually cooperative spirit with those who facilitate the supportive activities of the NIPT.

Pedagogical decision-making in the complex settings of primary school classrooms is difficult. It is particularly so for beginning teachers who are learning while responding to the immediate demands of the probationary process. Some thirty years ago, Feiman-Nemser (1983) noted that the assumption that beginning teachers should be 'competent' ignores the fact that important aspects of learning to teach are associated with teaching experience over time. Failing to acknowledge the incremental nature of competency development reinforces a view that teaching is relatively easy to master in a brief period of time. Teacher knowledge is regarded as something that can be quickly summoned and applied at will. In respect of the present participants, techniques that respond to immediate probationary-related needs are valued over complex, interactive and responsive understandings of practice that grow slowly. Therefore, as with the student teachers studied by Hall et al. (2012), representative vignettes presented in respect of the beginning teachers participating in my study,

notable exceptions aside, attest to a relational imbalance between adherence to the reified practices of an evaluative probationary process, particularly the tailoring of practice in response to the perceived prejudices of particular inspectors, at the expense of more agentic, collaborative and responsive forms of practice. As the balance needs to be right, the inordinate degree to which reified probationary-related practices determined the course of the beginning year of teaching significantly compromised the ongoing shaping of positional identity among the beginning teachers in my study.

4.2.6 Assessment inspired assistance and the shaping of positional identities

As with the generality of induction programmes internationally, mentoring activities in Irish primary schools, whether NIPT-aligned or not, offer short-term assistance to ease beginning teachers' entry into teaching (Killeavy 2001; O'Doherty and Deegan 2009). As outlined earlier, my study establishes that within the predominantly veteran-oriented professional cultures of Irish schools, a narrow rather than an expansive view of mentoring support prevails, frequently resulting in less than fulsome commitment on the part of assigned mentors, and beginner complicity in how mentoring support is narrowly conceived and transacted. In the present sub-section, the degree to which the form of mentoring assistance offered is influenced by the dominantly evaluative probationary system is examined.

In Ireland, a range of stakeholders are involved in either assisting or assessing a beginning teacher: school principals, assigned and sought-after mentors, NIPT workshop facilitators, members of the DES Inspectorate. My study establishes that positional differentials among stakeholders ensure that the narrowly defined, performative requirements of the probationary process exert a profound influence on

the manner in which mentoring is transacted. The relatively privileged position of the Inspectorate within the figured worlds of primary schooling ensures that the supportive actions of other stakeholders are principally concerned with attending to the perceived probationary requirements of beginners. As a result, mentoring practices, indeed induction generally, is manifestly 'positional' in that hierarchical and status-related considerations significantly influence its conceptualisation and transaction.

Overall, mentors do not assist beginners to acquire the understandings of teaching embedded in teachers' expertise to interpret classrooms and to respond to children as learners. Feedback conversations are not opportunities for beginners to appropriate the knowing of their mentors, which might assist their later interpretations and responses. Instead, as with the mentors studied by Edwards and Protheroe (2003, p. 230), because of probationary-related pressures, mentoring focuses on polishing the visible performance of beginners in ways that diverts their attention from a primary concern with the promotion of pupil learning. Consistent with this approach, the rationale invoked by Fiona's mentor, belatedly, urging, even mandating, engagement in a modicum of reflective practice was unconnected to pupil learning:

> Interviewer: Was the mentor very concerned about what the inspector was likely to look for?
>
> Fiona: Yes. He [inspector] had been in the school before and she [mentor] knew that my inspector in particular likes reflections, so I had to do weekly reflections [Interview 3].

The relationship between the beginner teacher and the school principal is particularly important for the shaping of beginner identity (Youngs 2007; Birkeland and Feiman-Nemser 2012). Although not engaged in mentoring *per se*, beginners report that, to

varying degrees, probationary-related issues shaped how principals understood the induction process. Aside from routine daily staffroom and playground-related contacts, with one exception, direct in-class engagements between principal and beginner were infrequent and cursory in nature. Of particular interest, therefore, is the nature of those in-class engagements that did take place. Olivia's principal only came to the classroom *for five minutes.* Despite the brevity of the occasion, informed by the transmissionism characteristic of traditional practice, and with Olivia's probationary obligations in mind, the primary purpose of the principal's visit was evaluative:

> Olivia:……so he didn't really see me teaching for that long. And then he jumped up in the middle of it, it was Irish [Gaelic], and he started asking them [pupils] other questions in Irish and I think testing what we should have learned previously. And that was kind of off putting for me because I was terrified that they wouldn't remember something even though I shouldn't have been because they are only small.
>
> Interviewer: A bit of an evaluation ceremony.
>
> Olivia: Yes I didn't feel it was to give me constructive criticism [Olivia, Interview 2].

Equally, for Oisín's principal, transmissionist concerns also informed his induction approach. Unlike Olivia's principal, who checked that Irish [Gaelic language] curricular content had been successfully transmitted for memorisation by young learners, the advice dispensed by Oisín's principal related to him not rendering himself vulnerable to accusations of presenting false evidence of purported accomplishments, either on the classroom walls, or in planning documents.

> Oisín: …….he [principal] said, 'don't put anything up [on the classroom walls] if you haven't actually done it, or don't put anything in the cúntas míosúil [monthly report] if you haven't done it.' I think when the inspector came in [visited the principal] he was talking about what they [pupils] have mastered rather than what you have covered. Like what the children have learned rather than what you think you have covered. Like you could do something and they mightn't get it and you

> still have it recorded as done and if they were asked about it they mightn't remember it at all [Interview 2].

Thus, the advice dispensed by his principal leaves Oisín in little doubt as to what can legitimately be displayed in the classroom or recorded in planning templates; namely, material that has been fully transmitted into the memories of learners for later retrieval on those occasions when an inspector visits on probationary-related business.

When she enquired of her principal as to the identity of her inspector, Geraldine gleaned the extent to which her principal and deputy principal were beholden to what they perceived, needlessly as it transpired, were the planning criteria the inspector in question demanded of probationers. The following vignette reveals the degree of professional development required, post-2015 (Teaching Council 2013), if schools, and, by implication, those in positions of authority in schools, are to acquire a satisfactory sense-of-self as professional learning communities, responsible for appropriately and comprehensively addressing the learning needs of their newest teaching recruits:

> Geraldine: ……. I said to my principal that I had heard she could find out who my inspector would be and she rang up and got the name …….. But all of a sudden then the principal and vice principal said to me, 'make sure you have this, make sure you have this.' And they really got me very stressed about it. …….So I was being told this on a Friday and for all I knew I could have had my [probationary] visit on the Monday.
>
> Interviewer: So it was kind of like fire brigade stuff.
>
> Geraldine: Yes it was. And the big thing that all of a sudden they were giving me these school plans that I had asked for at the start [of the school year] and hadn't gotten because obviously people had forgotten about it and saying, 'make sure all your notes correspond to this.' And I was like, I have done four months worth of notes and what if they don't match this now and I have never been told. But the principal was saying, 'look we can alter it for when he [inspector] is there.' And I was just getting so worried because I was saying, 'is he really going to match the school plans to my plans?' And they were like, 'oh he will, he is that type.'

> Interviewer: So basically if his [inspector's] expectations were out of sync with what you had been doing you had a problem and yet experienced people in the school were bringing a different tape measure to bear on all the work that you had done based on nothing more than what they thought might have been his [inspector's] prejudices.
>
> Geraldine: Yes and all before then [the first half of the school year] just at the end of staff meetings the principal would say, 'make sure your planning is in keeping with the school policy.' But as far as I was concerned the ones I had gotten were the only policies that existed but then all of a sudden the history one that I couldn't find was found, and the geography one was there and I had planned without it and stuff like that. It wasn't until they found out the name of my inspector that the effort was made to open a locked cupboard and give me all the missing policies [locked, prior to her departure on leave-of-absence, by a fellow teacher] [Geraldine, Interview 2].

Other principals were so in thrall to the perceived probationary demands of the inspectorate, they not so much cowered, as in the manner of Geraldine's principal, belatedly demanding that planning documents reflect principles enunciated in policy documents, as proactively proclaim themselves as quasi inspectors. Oisín's principal, for instance, who rarely visited his class, willingly volunteered to pay a visit *if you ever want to me to act as an inspector* [Interview 3]. Equally, from the outset, Fiona's principal, who, exceptionally, monitored her teaching on a regular basis, left her in no doubt as to how he viewed his role: *He said to me on the first day that he sees himself as an inspector* [Interview 2]. As it transpired, his interpretation of the inspectorial role was exclusively evaluative rather than supportive, which has implications for the preparation of school principals for involvement in the probationary process, post-2015 (Teaching Council 2013). Also evident, from Fiona's experience, is the profound mediating influence of positional identity on how beginner-principal exchanges are sometimes transacted in the workplace:

> Fiona: ……. He [principal] was coming from a place saying, 'you are not in teacher practice anymore, you need to be able to set

> yourself up as a serious teacher in the school, the kids know that you are new and the kids know you are young, they know that.'
>
> Interviewer: They know that so you are going to have to compensate for that [being new and young].
>
> Fiona: Yes. And that was fine for the first time he came into me but after that it just sounded like he was telling me to grow up or get old or something fairly rapidly.
>
> Interviewer: And do you make any contribution to those sorts of conversations or do you just listen and take the advice?
>
> Fiona: I generally just listen because there is not much point I find in saying, 'no I did manage the class well,' when you are talking to somebody who, first of all gave you the job, second of all is in charge of the school and after that then he does know more than I do, he is more experienced than I am so I wouldn't be inclined to say, 'no you are wrong.'
>
> Interviewer: Do you find that dispiriting or water off a duck's back?
>
> Fiona: The first time I took it to heart especially because he would say things like, 'I am after hiring you now, and I can clearly see that you are good from your CV but now I want to see it in practice.' And he definitely has the power over you; you definitely get that feeling from talking to him [Interview 2].

The nature of the exchanges between Fiona and her principal resonate with ideas advanced by Holland et al. (1998, pp. 44-45) that, as position is not fate, personal activity always occurs from a particular place in the social field of ordered and interrelated positions of possible activity. Thus, the actions of both Fiona and her principal were a function of the acute sense each possessed of their respective social positions within the figured world of the school.

While not proclaiming himself as a quasi inspector, in the manner of Oisín's and Fiona's principals, positionally, Ruth's principal is sufficiently self-assured to semi-contravene the directions of her inspector in respect of how learning objectives are

marshalled in planning documents; though ultimately he concedes that Ruth is to *do what she* [inspector] *says*:

> Ruth: ……she [inspector] has kind of pointed you on the road she wants because it is very subjective, what she wanted for her objectives which would have been different from what the principal.....the principal would have been more of the mind, your long terms are from the curriculum and then for you short terms as well, the teacher should be making some of them up themselves because what I want them to know at the end, whereas she wasn't of that mind at all. So you have to go with what she says but he disagrees with her but obviously he says to do what she says. But he would disagree. Her pet [expectation] is the objectives and she wants them just copied and pasted from the curriculum whereas... there has been huge issues over that especially with regards to English and the WSE [Whole School Evaluation] coming up and oh what does she want from you, and other inspectors coming in [Interview 2].

While possible to interpret as evidence of healthy debate, the inspector and school principal being at cross purposes as to how best to direct beginning practice, it is more likely that it displays their poor sense of how, together, they could purposefully facilitate beginning teachers.

References to *the WSE* and *other inspectors coming in,* at the conclusion of the vignette, is evidence of the degree of reform needed in respect of how beginning teachers are supported. In my study, no fewer than three of the nine participating beginning teachers, namely, Bernadette, Fiona and Ruth, worked in schools where a Whole School Evaluation (WSE) was undertaken during the course of the 2010/11 school year. Incongruously, none of the three were accommodated in any way owing to their beginning status. Ruth, already assigned a difficult fifth class, was selected by her principal for a WSE-related inspection rather than the vastly more experienced teacher who taught the only other 5th class in the school. Fiona was inspected as early as September 24th of her beginning year, as part of the WSE process, but not 'initially'

visited, as part of the probationary process, until the following February! Entirely consistent with the outlook of veteran-oriented cultures, all three beginners were expected to negotiate their own progress through the WSE. So much for the 'whole school' element of the exercise!

Thus, the nature of school culture and the characteristics of school organisation are key mediating factors in framing how induction and mentoring initiatives are implemented in schools. As school sites are where key factors influencing the shaping of identity converge, principals, mentors, teaching colleagues and school inspectors do not independently influence beginners' positional identities. Instead, their influence is mediated by the social, cultural and organizational contexts of schools (Johnson 2004; Wang et al. 2008; Feiman-Nemser 2010; Kardos and Johnson 2010).
In my study, occurring to the detriment of developing beginners' capacities to complicate aspects of practice and respond adventurously and ambitiously to those complications, the relatively privileged position of the DES Inspectorate, within the figured worlds of primary schooling, causes supportive actions to be inordinately influenced by the perceived evaluative requirements of probationary processes.

Learning affordances, however, are only part of the identity shaping dynamic as the shaping of beginning identity cannot be conceived of without considering the reciprocal interplay between workplace affordances and how an individual chooses to engage with those affordances (Dotger and Smith 2009; Cohen 2010; Billett 2011). Thus, the themes of affordance or structure, and agency are intertwined to the extent that an individual's learning in a particular workplace context is unique (Stronach

2010; Haggarty et al. 2011). These themes are considered in the following sub-section.

4.3 Beginning teacher as 'active person': shaping as well as being shaped

Though school-based cultures are highly immersing and intensively defining, it should not prevent acknowledgement of the individuality of the beginning teacher. Always unfinished and in process, the continuous self-fashioning of identity, the 'space of authoring', make a modicum of self-direction possible (Holland et al. 1998). Unlike poststructuralist approaches, which do not prioritise the role of agency, cultural-historical perspectives, from which all the theoretical constructs deployed in my study ultimately derive, understand teacher identity in terms of an agency evident at the centre of participative actions, necessary to the shaping of that identity (Zembylas 2003a, p. 224). The role of power relations in mediating these encounters is important. Never autonomous or independent, all actors are variously extended or constrained by the exigencies - real and imagined - of specific locations, as they engage in negotiating an identity (Hall et al. 2012, p. 3). Positional differences ensure a differential effect among participants with regard to their respective capacities to shape and change a culture. Cultures, then, are both structured and structuring, and individuals' actions are neither totally determined by the confines of a learning culture, nor are they totally free (Bourdieu 1977 cited in Hodkinson et al. 2008, p. 34). As a result, my study is sensitive to the balance between reification and participation (Hall et al. 2012) in the shaping of beginning teacher identities.

While tension may arise between the agency of beginning teachers and the structure of the school setting (Beijaard et al. 2004), a different consequence of beginners

acting as autonomous and unique persons is that new voices are introduced into the communities in which they participate. Beginning teachers are not merely novices that have to uncritically adopt the norms, values and common practices of the school. Increasingly, beginning teachers are also conceived of as brokers who open up possibilities for experienced teachers and schools to learn, for example, by asking critical questions or by introducing new pedagogical ideas and insights to the school.

Within cultural-historical perspectives, individual persons are viewed as reciprocal parts of the social context in which they learn, and vice versa. The individual and social dimensions of learning are, accordingly, perceived as mutually constitutive (e.g. Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998; Holland et al. 1998; Holland and Lave 2009). When individuals join communities their specific preferences and predispositions do not disappear, although they may be moderated. Of interest, in the context of developing more integrative school cultures in the future, is that, over time, communities also develop preferences and predispositions that will influence their ability to create and absorb new knowledge (Roberts 2006, p.629). Therefore, in advancing the view that new teachers both shape and are shaped by their work context, my study adopts an interactionist approach towards the shaping of beginning teacher identity (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Flores 2006; Flores and Day 2006; Flores 2010).

Adopting an interactionist approach also facilitates a study of the dialogical nature of identity shaping as a matter of the teacher being an active participant with a specific identity at a particular moment in a specific context (Hermans 1996, 2012; Holland et al. 1998, pp. 171-172; Akkerman and Meijer 2011). Accordingly, in various school-based situations - classroom interactions, meetings, mentoring arrangements -

beginning teachers shift identity positions in response to relevant others - pupils, colleagues, principals, inspectors, parents - thus giving rise to tensions (Akkerman and Meijer 2011, pp. 316-317). While tensions can be disruptive, it is also argued that tensions can also prove fertile for creativity and learning (Feiman-Nemser 1983; Engeström 2001; Alsup 2006; Mezirow 2009). Achieving an understanding of this complexity demands careful examination of the doubts, dilemmas, and uncertainties that beginning teachers experience when acting agentically within their normal work routines and in wider, out-of-school settings.

4.3.1 Micropolitical nous, agentic actions and the art of the possible

Beginning teachers enter workplace contexts that may prefer that their teachers enact a role that has been defined by the system, rather than that they self-author their role and, hence, their identity, in a self-motivated, self-directed, agentic manner. As the balance between reification and participation determines the shape of emergent identities and a relational imbalance between the two compromises the participative meaning making processes necessary for the authoring of a self (Hall et al. 2012, p. 3), beginning teachers need to be prepared to negotiate that system in a way that is productive for them and their students (Rodgers and Scott 2008, p. 751). In my study, even when it meant acknowledgement of their relative inexperience, or inability to effect desired changes, beginning participants displayed considerable evidence of developing the micropolitical literacy or nous necessary for the skilful negotiation of issues in the workplace (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a, 2002b). Indeed, beginners were not merely acquiring micropolitical skills but were also practising micropolitical literacy (Curry et al. 2008).

Consistent with this assertion, Geraldine, very early in her beginning year, in trying to ascertain if the spelling scores in her class were considered to be *quite bad,* is aware that her enquiries may offend colleagues *as these children would have been taught by teachers before* [previously] [Interview 1]. Not being one of the three teachers charged with preparing a school choir to partake in a choral festival placed Liam in a position where he could observe and *take note of some items* but adopt a *diplomatic role when making some suggestions* with regard to effecting changes [e-mail no. 7]. Fiona, also, succinctly summarises the delicacy of approach manifested by many beginners: *….you don't want to tread on people's toes or get people wound up the wrong way* [Interview 1]. Equally sensitive to *not treading on people's toes* and being *really delicate with other colleagues* [Interview 3], on the occasion of his first staff meeting, having previously experienced other types of workplaces, Liam's antennae are alert to the micropolitical nature of his new setting. Intrigued as to *how the meeting may turn out, especially in relation to what staff members would say or not say……From previous experience in the workplace, I knew best to just look after my own business and not get involved in matters to which I have no experience* [e-mail no. 2].

In various ways, participants displayed a capacity to think and act agentically; even if, for Oisín, acting agentically within the confines of an evaluative culture is tantamount to a guilty pleasure: *……the inspector doesn't know this, but I didn't use any of my plans today, I did something completely different* [Interview 1]. Disenchantment, on Danielle's part, with the *absolutely pointless* traditional school practice of *the Friday test of spellings and tables,* is modified somewhat by the realisation that efforts, on her part, to reform the practice will have to await her having *more of a standing in the*

school [Interview 3]. In the meantime, surreptitiously, Danielle occasionally resorts to undermining the practice:

> Danielle: ..... if I had something else to do on Friday morning we might not do the spelling test. And the kids have this new thing where they kind of go, don't say it to her, she hasn't realised she hasn't given the test! I know fully that I haven't done the test [Interview 3].

Danielle's experience with regard to the traditional ritual of the spelling test resonates with an image of identity as improvised and continuously in a state of self-fashioning. Persons, such as Danielle and Oisín, are caught in the tensions between past histories that have settled in them, referred to as history-in-person by Holland and Lave (2009), and present discourses and images that attract them or somehow impinge upon them, making a modicum of self-direction possible (Holland et al. 1998, p. 4).

Most advice offered to beginners in relation to hosting their first parent-teacher meetings was well intentioned, enlightened and supportive, including advice dispensed on *diplomatic ways of saying negative things* [Olivia, Interview 2]. With respect to the duration of parent-teacher meetings, however, Niall disregarded advice received from some senior colleagues *to go with five minute slots and have them all on one day*. Instead, *thinking the five minutes was a bit short*, to prevent time overruns and consequent delays for parents, Niall decided to *split them over two days with ten minute slots instead* [e-mail no.3]. While being advised to curtail the sole annual parent teacher meeting to a mere five minutes may appear cynical, it pales by comparison with the cynicism characterising advice received by Ruth in relation to curtailing the duration of parent-teacher meetings: *one person said to leave the window open, they* [parents] *get nice and cold* [Interview 2].

On noticing that colleagues discussed the progress, or lack thereof, of pupils in their respective classes, in public spaces such as the staffroom, Liam, who treats issues pertaining to his charges *as very kind of private,* has completely *distanced himself from all of that. I don't agree with it and I don't believe in it* [Interview 1]. Although, contradictorily, Liam basked in *the nice boost of confidence* [Interview1] he derived from having his class publicly praised by colleagues for the quality of their answering at a school assembly devoted to development education; deservedly so, as the pupils' answering derived from Liam's teaching of related topics.

Resonating with the assertion that a source of identity tension among beginners, relates to reconciling a desire to care for pupils while being expected to adopt a tough disciplinarian approach (Pillen et al. 2013a, 2013b, 2013c), throughout her beginning year, Fiona was advised by her principal to alter her *cool, calm and collected* teaching style, owing to it being *too timid*. Modelled, most likely, on his own forceful management style, Fiona's principal repeatedly advised her, without great cause, to *boom the voice* and *bang a few tables* [Interviews 1, 2 & 3]. Interestingly, having initially lent some positional credence to this advice, *not necessarily conforming but you definitely take into consideration who is saying it to you* [Interview 1], from mid-year, more agentic intent is apparent in Fiona: *the principal was telling me to change my style and I was like no* [Interview 2]; *I didn't take that* [advice] *on board* [Interview 3].

Bernadette, albeit diplomatically, also ignored the advice of a senior colleague:

> …..when we were doing the Christmas play and we were doing all these modern songs and one of the teachers in my school was like, oh you should just turn off the radio and let them sing themselves. And I was like, are you serious? I obviously said 'thanks very much'. But are you

> serious? And then she told me something else, like she was trying to sabotage my play because I was like kneeling down and directing them because they are only eight. And she was like; don't bother doing that you are better off to stand down the back. I don't know what she was doing like. I ignored that [Bernadette, Interview 2].

Consistent with this evidence, positional identities, as Holland et al. (1998, p. 143) state, are not without their disruptions.

4.3.2 Incidental learning of the sought after kind

Drawing on the ideas of Solomon et al. (2006) on everyday learning at work, my study attempts to glean if beginners learned 'through the cracks' in workplace settings. Of particular interest was whether this 'in-between learning' was unplanned, happened upon incidentally, even haphazardly, or, alternatively, was more deliberately sourced.

For Oisín, the staffroom represents a centre of learning: *I hear a lot of the time some other teacher saying, 'this is what I am doing now this week.'……. some sort of camera work with his class or taking them outdoors to read books and making banoffi pie or whatever…..in the staffroom there is a lot of talk about learning ….and you go, 'I am going to do that because it is a good idea'* [Oisín, Interview 3]. Similarly, for Geraldine, the staffroom is a location of considerable learning:

> …….they'd be bouncing ideas off each other lot……. teachers would talk about things that go well for them or tricks they have or they would talk about things that went wrong in their classroom and what they are doing to deal with it and you definitely pick that all up. Even if it is subconscious, maybe when I am in another class and something happens I might remember the advice. Because it is not a very big school you would know all the students and other people would have taught them so they'd be bouncing ideas off each other a lot [Geraldine, Interview 3].

Having, already *picked up* a host of ideas from the *large place we have for art displays*, in gleaning how experienced colleagues marshalled a class, Liam used the whole school as a learning laboratory:

> ……just observing things like how staff would interact with other kids around the school, if they had to pick them up on an issue of manners or something……. all those issues and how strict to be with a class, going in initially, I had no experience of that. And I suppose I was aware of just trying to pick up on how different teachers would look after a class and how much leeway they would give them and how much behaviour was acceptable and unacceptable and where to draw the line.
> [Interview 3]

In relation to the issue of *leeway*, Niall learned from his observations of colleagues *to be a bit stricter as opposed to trying to being their friend, even if it means coming across as being very mean at times* [Interview 3].

Inclement weather signalled a learning opportunity for Bernadette.

> ….like on the rainy days when you are on yard duty and you don't go outside and you walk around [inside the school] kind of thing and you see the position of their [teaching colleagues] tables and simple things like putting elastic around the copy books and not having them all piled up on each other. Just the way their library is made out or a different scheme for the library, like read five books and get a homework free kind of thing. Oh yes that sounds good. Or just displays [Bernadette, Interview 2].

Fiona was also a beneficiary of inclement weather, which, given the default setting of the skies over Ireland, augers well for the professional development of beginning teachers! Obliged to remain indoors during break time, Fiona was supervising the infant classes:

> ……..and the senior infants teacher just said something as simple as... just the way she went about saying, 'everyone sit down and you are doing great work,' something like that, even the affirmation...
>
> Interviewer: The way she handled a lot of kids.
>
> Fiona: She could have been screaming, 'everyone in their seats,' but she didn't.

Interviewer: The way she handled it. So that was a behaviour management trick that you learned.

Fiona: And that was even by using a different tone of voice.

Interviewer: Rather than coming in negatively.

Fiona: Yes [Interview 2].

These vignettes, in drawing attention to the unplanned and incidental learning that takes place in spaces such as staffrooms and playgrounds, resonate with the views of Solomon et al. (2006) on remaining cognisant of the potential of spaces not normally considered to be learning spaces. Considerations of unconventional learning spaces also resonate with ideas articulated by Brown and Duguid (1993) on casually obtained or 'stolen' knowledge.

4.3.3 Customising the generic

Attendance on the part of all newly qualified or probationary teachers at NIPT-organised workshops is, since September 2012, an obligatory requirement for registration by the Teaching Council (DES 2012c). However, during the fieldwork phase of my study i.e. 2010/11 school year, attendance, on the part of probationary teachers, at the series of NIPT workshops, organised via the Education Centre network, was not obligatory. Instead, beginners were "strongly urged to enrol and participate fully in the programme" (DES 2010, p. 4). Of the nine beginners participating in this study, six enrolled on the NIPT programme. Attendance at the workshop sessions on the part of three of the enrolees was sporadic. Inevitably, the variable nature of beginner reaction to the workshop sessions mirrored attendance levels!

Olivia, a regular attendee, deemed all but one of the workshops to be *brilliant…little tips and I'd be jotting them down and I am using them* [Interview 2]. Tackling *new modern ideas* such as co-operative learning, team teaching and station teaching, the vast majority of sessions were facilitated by *very experienced teachers who had lived every problem that you might encounter* [Olivia, Interview 3]. Unlike Olivia, who received no mentoring help in her school, Fiona believed that she benefited greatly from having her NIPT workshop sessions facilitated by a teaching colleague who also acted as her school-based mentor. The fortuitous dovetailing of these various mentoring elements, placed Fiona in a unique position among the inductees, an advantage she greatly appreciated. Geraldine, also a regular workshop attendee, while deriving benefit from some of the sessions, seemed so stressed by the probationary process that she objected to the relaxed manner of one of the tutors as insufficiently intensive, while contradictorily decreeing that the more intensive manner of another tutor was *very overwhelming* [Interview 2]. A case of damned if you do and damned if you don't!

Of those whose attendance at the workshop sessions was more sporadic, a variety of reasons were proffered to explain their absences. Due to an administrative misunderstanding, Niall was not informed of arrangements surrounding the four pre-Christmas sessions. He remained untroubled as he *had heard from other people that they weren't great, that a lot of it was common sense* [Niall, Interview 2]. However, the post-Christmas sessions, which focused on the topics of differentiation and assessment, and which Niall attended, were deemed *beneficial* [Interview 2]. Having finished school for the day, despite the tiring prospect of *going into a room full of*

teachers for another two hours, Niall attended about five workshops in all, deeming that, overall, they *probably were worthwhile,* while wishing that the workshop duration be cut to one hour [Interview 3]. Liam, like Niall, finds the immediate post-school timing of the workshop sessions problematic: *after a school day you wouldn't be immensely tuned in* [Interview 2]. In any case, due to a clash of commitments, Liam had not attended any of the NIPT workshop sessions but intended doing so during his second year as a teacher, the 2011/12 school year. Judging that most of the *information heavy workshop content is on their* [NIPT] *website anyway,* Liam is of the view that the most beneficial aspects of the workshop sessions, the group-orientated interactive elements, could more usefully be undertaken with friends or school colleagues on an informal basis [Interview 2].

Having *missed a couple,* Ruth also finds the timing of the workshop sessions problematic:

> …..they are kind of more of a pain to be going, driving down after a day's school and not coming home until about 7:00 or 7:30. You are a bit tired when you go there. A couple of them you pick up small little things and some of them have been a waste of my time because I haven't been zoned in and it is like a lecture in college [Interview 2].

Overwhelmed by probationary-related preparation and expectations that the subject matter addressed in some of the workshops should be implemented in class, Ruth feels conflicted:

> ……it is hard to implement all this differentiation in your first year when you are just trying to do all your notes and don't have time to be trying to cater for that, which you should be [Interview 2].

Eventually, Ruth makes a firm decision about her continuing attendance at the workshop sessions:

> I was going in one day and then I have to pass my house to go there and I was like, I am actually not going. Just because I thought, am I going to be more beneficial going home now and doing something for school or going to that? And I said, more beneficial going home, doing my own thing than going to that [Interview 2].

By mid-year, due to frustration and exhaustion, Bernadette also made a firm decision with regard to her continuing participation at workshop sessions:

> Bernadette……I said, why am I going over there? I finish school at 2:30, I have Irish dancing until 3:30, I was getting into my car, driving over to Ballytown to be there for 4:30, sit down for 2 hours, and then get in my car and get home for 7:30. That is a 12 hour day for listening to some one talking about how you do an English lesson, this is what you are supposed to do in a parent teacher meeting, and this is the difference in differentiation. We did all this in college, I have all the notes at home, I went to the lecture. The parent teacher meeting, they would give us a template but sure Mary (pseudonym), my principal, was going to give me the template that we use in our school so I am like, why did I come here, wasting 4 hours of my evening.
>
> Interviewer: So basically you felt that they repeated the content which you learned in college; their templates were similar to what was available in your own school in relation to say parent teacher meetings and things like that.
>
> Bernadette: I think maybe it might have been useful for a different type of teacher starting off. If there was a girl who moved to Abbeytown and she was getting no help from her staff, no help from her principal, she needed support, she needed to know these things, who was she going to ask? She had nobody to ask.

Interestingly, though she had ceased to view the NIPT workshop session as valuable for her practice, Bernadette recognised that the sessions remain potentially valuable for beginners who taught in environments less supportive than the one prevailing in her own school.

These vignettes illustrate the variable, nuanced nature of how beginners experienced the NIPT workshop series. The reservations, even dismissiveness, expressed by some of the inductees, particularly Ruth and Bernadette, resonate with Feiman-Nemser's

(2010) view that discrete, freestanding, stand-alone formal induction programmes, such as the NIPT-organised workshop series, are, broadly, deficient in two respects.

Firstly, a short-term, instrumental focus on eased entry to the workplace, individualistically orientated and privileging beginners' immediate concerns, ignores the long-term, formative, educative purpose of beginning teacher development. In a critique of the generic, 'idealised features' of induction processes, Stronach (2010, pp. 212-213) states that teachers generally move quickly from 'recipe knowledge' (e.g. lesson planning templates) to more elaborate forms of reasoning grounded in their accumulating experience. Induction programmes, therefore, need to be able to match and to engender these levels of complexity. Therefore, it is necessary that formal induction programmes, situated in the intentional, rather than incidental, learning of the central tasks of teaching, are seen as but one element of a career-long professional learning continuum, contributing to the ongoing study and improvement of teaching (Feiman-Nemser 2001, 2010; Teaching Council 2011a, 2013). As a result, NIPT induction programme must be conceived, not as freestanding, discrete and isolated entities, providing generic, short-term assistance to first-year teachers, but as the beginning stage of a collaboratively orientated, ongoing, job-embedded professional development continuum for all teachers.

Secondly, formal induction programmes, usually delivered in off-site locations and catering to the 'average experience' of beginners (Stronach 2010), take insufficient account of the mediating influence of the institutional contexts and professional cultures that surround new teachers. Instead, teachers are helped to fit into schools as they are rather than helped to participate in transforming schools into more effective

sites for teacher and pupil learning. However, Feiman-Nemser (2010, p. 20) advises, if we want to understand the induction process and direct it towards desired ends, we must attend to the socialising influence of school culture and organisational structures. After all, the school site is where key factors that influence new teacher induction converge. A principal objective of induction programmes should be to help new teachers, preferably within the ambit of integrated professional cultures (Johnson 2004, 2012a, 2012b; Kardos and Johnson 2007), adapt and enact, in context-sensitive ways, pedagogic approaches calculated to fit the needs of specific pupil cohorts.

Of significance, these two issues, outlined above, have implications for the conceptualisation, design and delivery of NIPT-organised induction programmes, directed at addressing the needs of beginning teachers. While acknowledging the tension between the principles of adaptation and transformation, a failure to do so, leads beginners, especially those in unsupportive environments, to abandon their presumably well-designed and ambitious beginning repertoire of approaches to curriculum, instruction and assessment, in favour of safer, less complex activities.

4.4 Conclusion

In focusing on contextuality, Chapter 4 attempts to elucidate the mutually constitutive, dialogical manner in which beginning teacher identity is shaped in the 'fields', 'spaces' and 'places' wherein society organises beginning teachers (Holland et al. 1998, p. 287; Akkerman and Meijer 2011). Doing so helps to address the underemphasised consideration of contextual factors within the broader framework of teachers' professional identity studies (Beijaard et al. 2004). The importance of keeping the agentic, negotiated nature of identity shaping to the fore, thus avoiding

placing undue emphasis on context-related, designated or imposed conceptualisations of identity, is acknowledged. Thus, arising from the consideration of contextually-related issues in this chapter, three broad-based claims emerge from my study.

Firstly, among participants, decision-making in relation to choosing primary teaching as a career was characterised by a significant degree of variability. In general, even in the face of initial resistances, adherence to deeply-entrenched family and community-related values and traditions was evident among those from 'traditional' teaching backgrounds. Alternatively, among those from 'non traditional', underrepresented teaching backgrounds, the decision to teach owed as much to happenstance as to favourable circumstance.

Secondly, relying on an inherited 'cultural script' which stresses the innate, immutable capabilities of the individual 'good teacher', my study uncovers ample evidence that the influence of early teacher role models, both positive and negative, help shape the nascent teaching identities of research participants. Additionally, perceptions of the 'good teacher' as empathetic "facilitator" feature more commonly than do either "executive" or "liberationist" conceptualisations (Fenstermacher and Soltis 2009). Therefore, although identity is often defined in terms of how one is seen by others, the act of seeing others as certain kinds of people is itself an enactment of a way of being in the world.

Thirdly, of particular importance in the figured world of beginning teaching is the manner in which 'power' is operationalised in the workplace between a beginning teacher and others whose positions are defined relationally vis-à-vis the beginner.

Manifestly ‘positional’ in that hierarchical and status-related considerations significantly influenced its conceptualisation and transaction, in my study mentoring practices were principally concerned with mediating the intricacies of long-established, primarily evaluative, probationary obligations. More generally, the inordinate degree to which reified, probationary-influenced practices, determined the course of the beginning year of teaching, significantly compromised the ongoing shaping of positional identity among those participating in my study. Performativity, therefore, short-circuited or constrained the range of learning affordances potentially available to beginners.

The following two shorter chapters address the two further dimensions considered important to the shaping of identity. Chapters 5 and 6 deal, respectively, with the emotional and temporo-spatial dimensions of beginning teachers’ identity shaping.

Chapter 5: Emotionality and the shaping of beginning teacher identity

To neglect the emotional character of teaching contributes towards an underestimation of its inherent complexity. Yet, in spite of the relevance of the emotional dimension of teaching, many discussions of identity emphasise the cognitive aspects of teacher experiences. It could be argued, however, that the more influential factor at work in shaping identity is emotion or our experience of affect (O'Connor 2008; Shapiro 2010; Stronach 2010; O'Brien 2012).

Notoriously amorphous, the field of emotions in teaching and teachers' lives struggles with vague definitions and multiple terminologies. However, despite the challenging nature of the terrain, the role of emotions in teaching and teachers' lives is receiving increased attention. Promoting a more nuanced view of teacher development, teachers' emotions have recently been at the heart of several lines of research (e.g. Deegan 2008; O'Connor 2008; Sutton et al. 2009; Schutz and Zembylas 2009; Farouk 2010, 2012; Corcoran and Tormey 2010, 2012, 2013; Bahia 2013; Aspfors and Bondas 2013). As a result, the teaching profession is, increasingly, viewed as not merely a technical or cognitive practice but also fundamentally social, relational and emotional, all intimately intertwined. Emerging views strongly suggest that we re-examine practices from teacher education through to teacher retirement utilising a lens that includes the emotional dimension of teaching.

Representing a significant change in the life course, beginning to teach is deeply personal work, engaging beginners' emotions as it plays out against the backdrop of

forming an identity as a teacher. While some lines of research have focused on the emotional dimension of beginning teaching, namely on well-being, stress, burnout and reality shock (e.g. Veenman 1984; Huberman 1989), the emotional experiences that are an integral part of the process of becoming a teacher have been insufficiently explored in the research literature (Day and Lee 2011; Jakhelln 2011). As a result, much less is known about the role of emotions in learning to teach by comparison with other dimensions of beginning teaching. However, an appreciation is developing that strong emotions are aroused in the process of 'becoming' a teacher, as beginners experience a range of work-related dilemmas (Zembylas and Schutz 2009). In essence, the intense emotionality of teaching is increasingly recognised as a primary dimension of beginning to teach. As the daily work of beginning teachers takes place in contexts of multiple interactions, acting as sources of both satisfaction and emotional strain, relationships define beginning teachers' first work experiences (Isenbarger and Zembylas 2006; Aspfors and Bondas 2013). In an Irish context, that the complex of relationships between beginning teachers and other stakeholders in the workplace would provoke emotion is of no surprise. Resonating with Bullough and Young (2002, p. 421), the emotional volatility in learning to teach is well illustrated in Table 5A by the visceral nature of the 'vivid markers' (Stronach 2010, p. 209) used to describe beginning teaching experiences. Two additional observations concerning Table 5A are of interest. Firstly, a function of the developmental nature of the process, as the interview series progressed, participants gave freer rein to the expression of feeling, evidenced by the quantity of data contained in the 'Interview 3' column. Secondly, as compared to interview occasions, the outside-of-time-and-space aspect of the e-mail environment (Rodgers and Scott 2008, p. 747) did not seem to encourage greater forthrightness with regard to expressions of feeling.

Table 5A 'Vivid markers' describing beginners' experiences: as per data source

Name	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	e-mail logs
Liam	Felt completely comfortable and completely natural / irked me	response and enthusiasm / slapped it [pencil] on the table	headache / frustrating / reprimanded / punished	out of my depth / burden / overwhelmed / reprieve / agitated
Geraldine	gotten me down / frustrating / shocked / intimidated / very upsetting / personal attack / cranky / annoyed / punished /	really dreading / trouble / hassle / unreasonable / Bright and happy / patient / positive interactions / made me feel good / really rewarding	worried / feel better / stress inducing / anxiety / excited / like / lovely	Completely at sea / bad experience / complaining / worried / upsetting / best feeling / rollercoaster / anxiety / unsure / hope / relaxation / nerve-wracking
Fiona	nervous / upset / hated	constant worry / awful / shake me up / lovely / accommodating / encouraging	scarier / daunting / worried / tolerate / stress / crying with laughter / vicious	on edge / daunting / very nervous / huge pressure / unnerving
Niall	pressure / this carry on / this rubbish	Relax / nervous / encouraging / positive /	brilliant / unfair / cranky / frustrate / nice / tantrum / punish / worried / annoyed	enjoy / positive / glad / happy / enjoying / relax / stressful / struggle / nerve-wracking
Olivia	fobbed off / tormenting / nagging / guilty	Delighted / on the edge/ calmer / dreading / terrified / undermining	red alert / hated / delighted / relaxed / nervous / annoyed / panicky / scaremongering	disappointed / initial shock / scary / delighted / relieved / fantastic
Ruth	major stressful / not in the mood / oh my God / kind of scaring me	Tough / surviving / sick / messy / tired / good humoured / lovely / flee town / oh God no /	difficult / 'watch out' / sticklers / bad / nice / complimentary / Oh God / praise the Lord' / mad / cheeky / annoying / desperate / dreadful / crumble / too much	Trying enough / apprehensive / tough going / tiring / disruptive / run in / low point / nice / difficult / annoying
Oisín	disaster / panicking /	annoyed / nervous / wrecked / storming	tension / worry / screams / upsetting /	Stress / tiredness / less energy / well behaved
Danielle	calm down / cold vibe / a real edge	annoying / discouraging / on my nerves / nervousness	complaining / great fun / affirming / bad mood / take it to heart / miserable / arguing	friendly / welcoming / obliging / sniper / lovely / pleasant / horrible / wonderful / glad
Bernadette	I love them [pupils]	love my job / love the kids / delighted / breakdown / frustrated / stressed	petrified / threatening / in an awful way / couldn't eat or sleep / frustrating / annoying / petrified / fantastic / loved	joy / thrilled / stressful / fun / fantastic / enjoy / happy/ relief

The present chapter is framed in the following manner. In presenting evidence concerning ways emotions seem significantly implicated in the shaping of beginning teachers' identities, my main objective is to facilitate a conversation between that evidence and the cultural-historically derived, theoretical constructs referred to throughout this account.

The influence of others on teachers' sense of identity is crucial, as: "interpersonal worlds are organised around distinct sets of role relationships" (Bryk and Schneider 2002 cited in Wilkins et al. 2012, p. 70). Accordingly, data derived from three rounds of individual semi-structured interviews and e-mail logs are examined to establish how emotions are intertwined with the relationships that beginning teachers are building with a range of stakeholders: pupils, colleagues, principals, fellow beginners, parents, and inspectors, within their respective school communities. Determining the layout of this chapter, these separable, though not separate, sets of relationships, serve as a platform for my analyses of emotions that persist as beginning teachers assume early pedagogical responsibilities, under their own and others' scrutiny, within specific school and classroom cultures. I want to stress that discourses have meaning only in relation to one another and that none of the discourses in a given context is mutually exclusive. Therefore, as beginners piece together identities from the discourses that are made available to them, they simultaneously create possibilities and constraints for the identities of those with whom they are interacting (Gee 1996 cited in Miller Marsh 2002a, p. 336). Given the complexity of these role relationships, beginning teachers must undertake complex behavioural and conceptual professional learning in order to interpret and interact within the context in which they find themselves (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a). Though an alternative framework could

have been adopted, a scenario approach, for instance, my choosing to artificially separate or isolate the set of role relationships entered into during the initial year of workplace practice, helps to visibly portray the discursive shaping of emotional identity among beginners. In this way, using their words, I am interested in exploring what beginning teachers are feeling, resisting and choosing (Zembylas 2005), and how their induction into the emotional practice of teaching might be influencing the shaping of their teaching identities.

5.1 Pupils: '…….let's move on, clean slate'

Primarily defined as those emotions, actions and reflections that result from a teacher's desire to motivate, help or inspire their students, research on teachers' work has emphasised the importance of care, commitment and responsibility (Noddings 1992; Nias 1996; O'Connor 2008; Stronach 2010). By choosing to care for their pupils, beginners are able to shape a sense of identity which coheres with their beliefs about the teaching role. Noticeable in the desire to become a teacher in the first place, caring often derives from a wish to teach and to work closely with children (O'Sullivan et al. 2009). Much like beginners studied by Aspfors and Bondas (2013), beginners participating in my study describe love, care, joy, satisfaction, pride, excitement and happiness in connection with their beginning teaching:

> Bernadette: I always wanted to be a national [primary] school teacher. I think I really enjoy the children and I get a good kick out of it. Every day... like one day last week coming to school I got a puncture in my car and when I came in they were all like, 'múinteoir, múinteoir,' ['teacher, teacher'] and they are just cute, so I love them [Bernadette, Interview 1].

The importance of being sensitive, understanding, empathetic and willing to help is depicted. Pleasant and close contact with the pupils is also stressed:

> ……..I like the interaction with the children. I like getting to know their personalities and I like being able to even just make them feel good about themselves no matter what it is based on. It is a lovely thing to know that you made a child's day or that the child is happy to come into you at the start of the day [Geraldine, Interview 3].

Emotional passion for teaching is translated into enthusiasm and commitment towards students and knowledge (Day 2004; O'Connor 2008). Danielle, for instance, retained her enthusiasm and emotional energy throughout the course of her beginning year, as evidenced by e-mail log entries authored at either end of her beginning year:

> Danielle, e-mail, October 2010:
> My class are funny and they appreciate every bit of effort you put in as the teacher to make the learning process more interesting

> Danielle, e-mail, June 2011:
> The students are wonderful. Some are a bit bold, but never in a nasty way. Most are eager to please and want you to be happy with them.

In addition to the satisfaction of being part of pupils' experiences, progress and success, emotional bonds or relationships with pupils seem to be most essential when linked to pupil success resulting from the teachers' own commitment and effort (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a). However, as evidenced by Liam's experience, a tension exists between the joy and delight of working as a caring teacher and the exhaustion and tiredness it may simultaneously cause:

> ……recalling now how much disruption was caused over the duration of the [rehearsal] period, the night of the [choral] festival performance proved to be a unique and memorable experience for the children and staff. It also reinforced the relationship with the children to see them outside school in such a relaxed and enjoyable environment [Liam, e-mail, April 2011].

Apart from public, set piece occasions such as choral festival outings, *small things within the classroom* also possess the potential to enthuse and to create never-to-be-

forgotten moments for a beginner. One such early classroom experience proves memorable for Fiona:

> Interviewer: This year, was there any particular experience that stands out, that you said, ‘wow that was great’?
>
> Fiona: Small things within the classroom. One of the kids said something, we were talking about toads and he said something about a frog and they were saying that they are from France... or something like that toads were poisonous and I was saying what do they have to defend themselves from? And the young fellow put up his hand and said, 'the French.' They eat frog’s legs. And I was at the top of the room almost crying with laughter because it was so funny. And he is a very quiet young fellow.....
>
> Interviewer: Was he conscious of it as a joke?
>
> Fiona: He kind of was. I said, 'did you just say ‘the French’?' And he sort of laughed at himself, he knew it was a joke, and I thought it was hilarious. And then afterwards he wrote a little note to me, they all had to write down a little note of what they enjoyed from the year and he said he loved making the teacher laugh so much she cried. These sorts of things, they are so small but I know that he will remember it for ever because he made the teacher cry with laughter. And I will remember it because it is just so funny [Fiona, Interview 3].

Although close relationships with pupils are very important, there is growing evidence that the fulfilment of the teaching role requires emotional labour from a teacher (Schutz et al. 2009). Though the concept relates to workplaces generally, indeed all aspects of life, teaching is an occupation deemed to demand a considerable degree of emotional labour (Hochschild 1983 cited in Schutz and Zembylas 2009, p. 374). Emotional labour involves enhancing, faking or suppressing emotions to modify one’s emotional expressions or displays. Zembylas (2003a) draws attention to the emotional labour demanded of teachers to conform to what is deemed appropriate within schools i.e. the emotional rules of school. Accordingly, teacher identity is shaped within specific school arrangements, in relation to certain expectations and requirements. For example, feelings of anger are unwelcome in a culture that views teachers as

restrained, gentle, and nurturing. Yet, emotional labour in teaching, and especially the emotional labour demanded in student-teacher relationships and classroom management, is an area of research that has received insufficient attention (Sutton et al. 2009; Zembylas and Schutz 2009, p. 374).

While challenging relationships with pupils are ranked as one of the highest negative experiences amongst beginners (Day et al. 2008; Hobson 2009; Sutton & Wheatley 2003), for some participants in this study, challenging behaviour on the part of pupils was an insignificant issue. In Niall's mixed gendered setting, challenging relationships are exceptional: *Overall it would be very positive, I have a good relationship with all of them but there is one child from time to time, we don't get along*…… [Interview 2]. Equally, for Bernadette, challenging situations are quickly resolved, frequently due to the ready acquiescence of the teacher and the knowing connivance of a pupil!

> …….. even when I get so cross with my kids, there is always one that will just wrap me around their finger and I will be back again. And then 2:30 and they are gone home and the following day is a new day…… [Bernadette, Interview 2].

In line with more recent, positive conceptualisations of emotional labour, among beginners from whom a greater degree of emotional labour is demanded, the ability to utilise 'soft' skills involving feelings and emotions is regarded as an indicator of professional skill and, thus, not an alienating factor in the workplace (Cullen et al. 2013, p. 309). In this regard, participants in my study believe that emotional regulation, expressed as the regulation of *mood*, makes them more effective in classroom management, in dealing with discipline and in their relationships with students. For instance, towards the end of the first term of her beginning year,

Geraldine is of the view that she is *definitely getting better at allowing my mood to get better* [Interview 1]. Yet, while buoyed by her improving capacity to regulate her emotions, Geraldine considers herself as very much a work in progress:

> I tend not to lose my patience, but I get wound up……..
> Or the same child starts forgetting to bring their homework copy another day, I tend to lose my patience with that a lot and I really have to tell myself, let it go now because you don't want it to be the atmosphere in the classroom and you have a lovely Irish lesson planned, so let's get into it. It is something in my own life that if I get cranky, if something upsets me I find it very hard to be bright and happy again afterwards so it is definitely something I am working on at the moment. If I am annoyed at the level of homework not done in the morning time and we are going straight into Irish I need to get out of that and move on……..let's move on, clean slate. So that is something I am really working on, trying to be patient [Geraldine, Interview 1].

Similarly, throughout the course of her beginning year, Fiona came to understand the importance of emotional regulation:

> …….. you have to channel it and deal with it in a certain way because if you are in a bad mood everyone knows it and it changes your day, it changes the children's day, it might even change their evening……. When you are frustrated you have to really take a step back and realise that if you are frustrated it is nobody else's fault but your own. But I suppose that comes with every other job as well, it is part of being an adult and a responsible adult [Fiona, Interview 3].

In respect of challenging relationships with pupils, of the nine beginning participants, Ruth represents something of an exception. Assigned a *particularly challenging* senior class in her first year, *they had the other* [previous] *teacher for two years and she said she was nearly in the grave after them* [Interview 3]. Though *the majority of the class are probably fine,* due to the behaviour of a minority, classroom management remained problematic throughout Ruth's initial year: *I suppose I never probably got on with some of them actually ever.* The challenging behaviour of some pupils caused frustration. *There would be a lot of back answering and some children*

then would be quite cheeky. As a result, enjoyable episodes were deemed to be *few and far between* [Interview 2]. Feelings of insufficiency are also common if a teacher feels they fail to manage what they have made up their minds to undertake (Mayer 2011; Aspfors and Bondas 2013). In this respect, cooperative learning approaches proved too challenging for Ruth to successfully implement.

As with Geraldine and Fiona, Ruth also realised early in the beginning year the necessity of regulating her emotions or her *mood*, and that a degree of self-reliance was required in that regard:

> ..... like if I go in there today and I am in a great mood it is better, whereas some days when I go in and I am not in the mood to put up with your..... you are stuck then and the day isn't as good. But that is all up to me as well [Ruth, Interview 1].

By year's end, on the occasion of the annual school sports day, Ruth was obliged to call upon all her reserves of emotional regulation, lest she give full rein to her feelings of frustration, in full view of the parent body!

> Ruth: …..especially sports day, that was desperate because basically the parents can come in and out the whole day and you are basically going from one [sports activity] station to another with your class and they were bold and the parents would be there. That was probably the biggest time where it was like, oh you are going to show me up big time now and you'd be thinking, well I am not going to shout at them [pupils] in front of them [parents] [Ruth, Interview 3].

Here, the amount of emotional 'churning' is obvious; it takes a considerable amount of 'emotion work' or emotional labour, on Ruth's part, to construct an 'unemotional calm self' (Stronach 2010, p. 209). Thus, reflecting the findings of others (e.g. McNally 2010; Aspfors and Bondas 2013), the experiences of beginners participating

in my study reveal that, in relation to interacting with pupils, relationship building and the regulation or management of emotions are important issues in the first year. Resonating with relational emphases vis-à-vis positive teacher role models, referred to in previous chapters, it seems that being a 'good teacher' as per an inherited cultural script (Conway et al 2012) guides beginners towards prioritising their caring, nurturing, teacher-as- facilitator role (Fenstermacher and Soltis 2009).

5.2 Colleagues: …'there is a lot of solo work involved but I never feel isolated'

In advance of taking up his first teaching post, much like beginners studied by McNally (2010), anxious anticipation on Liam's part caused him to be in a fraught emotional state. Sensitive to evaluative scrutiny, prominent among the factors exercising Liam's mind was how he imagined his soon-to-be teaching colleagues would perceive him:

> I was apprehensive of and aware of knowing I had a job and I was, I suppose, debating with myself what would the other teachers be like. What would their approach be, what would their view on me be [Liam, Interview 3].

Undoubtedly, when remembering their own professional beginnings, Liam's sensitivity resonates with many teachers. For beginners, well functioning and close collaboration with colleagues contributes to satisfying professional experiences (McCormack and Thomas 2003; Flores and Day 2006; Kyriacou and Kunc 2007; McNally 2010; Aspfors and Bondas 2013). The importance of a permissive and open atmosphere, where everybody shows mutual respect, takes responsibility and helps each other, is emphasised. Among those participating in my study, appreciation is articulated for the support and help colleagues in general have offered. Furthermore,

to be taken care of, and the fact that fellow teachers are interested, listen, understand and show consideration is valued: *The staff are very supportive in the school; they are always willing to help and to offer advice* [Fiona, e-mail, September 2010]; *The staff are very friendly, welcoming and obliging* [Danielle, e-mail, October 2010]; *I find one of the teachers in 6th class, she is so accommodating, and she is lovely, very encouraging* [Fiona, Interview 2]. Encouraging and influencing the efforts of beginners, the commitment of colleagues is appreciated:

> Interviewer: Your experienced colleagues, would they invite you to seek help from them? Are people proactive in their offers of help?
>
> Olivia: Yes well two in particular yes, they would be and after the inspector and that, they would ring and ask what he advised and they were giving me their own experience…….Yes they are two I would definitely ask for advice. And then I have another friend who is in charge of sports. So this year, I hadn't taught gymnastics before and I was saying, oh God, but it actually turned out to be fine but I was dreading it, the set up and stuff. And now outdoor and adventure, I am dreading that too, the thought of it, but I know once I start I will be fine and she is very helpful in that, setting up an obstacle course and all that [Olivia, Interview 2].

These representative statements show the importance of being positively recognised as a new member of staff. A school climate possessing an open and positive atmosphere is crucial for beginners. To feel accepted, appreciated and to gain credence with colleagues is invaluable at the beginning of a career. Frequently, though, relationships between beginners and experienced colleagues, Aspfors and Bondas (2013) establish, include a tension between expansive and restrictive reciprocal actions. This means that the relation can either be experienced as mutual and close or distanced and fragmented. Mutual and close relationships are characterised by reciprocal, collegial collaboration and discussions among beginners and colleagues. Alternatively, distanced and fragmented relationships are characterised by sporadic contact. However, in contrast to the dichotomous, dualistic

representation of workplace relationships advanced by Aspfors and Bondas (2013), my study uncovers a more nuanced reality. Resonating with ideas pertaining to diversity, dissent, even disagreement (e.g. Achinstein 2002, 2006; Turkle 2010), beginners, motivated to forge their own reputations as teachers, prefer to determine the degree and nature of their engagements with colleagues. Reflective of the more commonly witnessed 'exchange and co-ordination' type activities, rather than less commonly practised, complex collaborative practices (Gilleece et al. 2009, p. 84), Niall's understanding of how the principle of collegial support is best transacted in practice, is representative:

> I suppose there is a lot of solo work involved but I never feel isolated or alone or anything in the work I do because there is a lot of support there at the same time. And I know that if I need any support that I can get it straight away [Niall, Interview 2].

Consistent with Niall's view, beginners, generally, had little difficulty in being viewed as learners. Occasionally, though, experienced colleagues were not afforded the opportunity to forge a close collaborative relationship with a beginner because of reluctance on the beginner's part to seek help, lest they be perceived as less than fully *professional* and fully capable of functioning as a teacher:

> Although fellow teachers were readily available and willing to offer any advice or answers, I felt that maybe I may be perceived as a mild hindrance or ask questions that may reduce my newly professional status. I felt that some members of staff would secretly question what practical everyday advice and procedures were given to undergraduates during time spent in the training college [Liam, e-mail, October 2010].

A decade ago, McCormack and Thomas (2003) drew attention to tensions in the relationships between beginners and more experienced teachers, often regarding the lack of appreciation on the part of experienced teachers of new teachers' ideas and opinions. More recently, Aspfors and Bondas (2013, p. 7) also uncover a darker side

to the relationships between beginners and colleagues, with unhealthy working climates and grudging colleagues leading to occasional examples of insult, depreciation, reproval, lack of trust, accusations, even harassment. In less than supportive, negative work climates, beginning teachers are frequently caught in a cycle of self-blame where school culture makes it easy to conclude that difficulties experienced in practice are teachers' fault alone and structural conditions are less influential than the individual's own failings (Winograd 2003, p. 1669). Therefore, the responses that beginners receive from their workplace colleagues are likely to have great impact on their emotions.

My study uncovered no evidence of working climates that could be described as unhealthy or of colleagues, for all their veteran-oriented dispositions, whose attitude towards beginners could be described as grudging. Instead, what does emerge is an appreciation that one's teaching colleagues reflect life in its infinite variety. At the conclusion of her initial year as a teacher, perhaps Danielle's colourful, though ultimately optimistic, assessment of her colleagues, articulates staffroom realities most comprehensively and accurately:

> You get these stroppy teachers that just seem to have been around education for so long that they have taken on the mindset of a child and you can almost see them slapping their fists on the table going, 'well that is just not fair,' when they don't get their way. And it is almost a bit of fear then thinking, God I hope I don't turn out like that because she is like a toddler having a fit or whatever. …….. other ones [colleagues] then are brilliant and hilariously funny because they don't take any messing and they come right out and there is no fear talking or speaking their mind. I mean the staff are lovely, I am not giving out about the staff or anything like that, there are just certain people and I do understand that is probably the case in every staff in every new job you go onto [Danielle, Interview 3].

For beginning teachers, support in managing the emotional unpredictability of classroom teaching and learning is as important as support in developing their pedagogical and classroom management skills (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Day and Gu 2010, p. 66; Devos et al. 2012). While remaining mindful of Christensen's (2013, p. 81) caution that collegial support is not necessarily always positive for beginners, nonetheless, in a context such as Ireland, much like Finland (Aspfors and Bondas 2013), which, as yet, lacks a well developed system for supporting new teachers, relationships within the school community, especially with colleagues and principals, are of great importance in providing informal support.

5.3 Principal: '…..later in the year the boundaries would have been fuzzier….'

Generally, leadership quality is a decisive factor for the whole school community (Fullan 2007). More specifically, when inducting a beginning colleague, the approach adopted by any school in terms of introduction and support will indicate what type of leadership a school encompasses (Youngs 2007; Birkeland and Feiman-Nemser 2012; Conway et al. 2011b; Conway et al. 2014). Encouragingly, in my study, a majority of participants were nurtured and supported by their respective principals, particularly Bernadette, Niall and Oisín: *She* [principal] *is fab, you should meet her*…. [Bernadette, Interview 2]; …..*our principal would always be talking to me at the end of every day, asking me how I am getting on and being very encouraging* [Niall, Interview 2]; *He* [principal] *is very approachable and other principals wouldn't be. He would be interested as well….he wouldn't just say never mind about that. He would be professional about it….. he is a great man* [Oisín, Interview 3]. Receipt of support from one's principal is not always as straightforward however. While

consistently *very supportive*, Fiona is of the view that her principal, initially somewhat aloof and judgemental, developed a modicum of warmth as the year progressed:

> Fiona: I think that he was very supportive, more so in the 2nd and 3rd terms. In the 1st term you would look at him as a judging person who comes into your room and can drop in at any moment. Whereas in the 2nd and 3rd terms you felt more comfortable, you could ask him for a favour or support or something like that. And he would within reason. You wouldn't be asking a silly favour.
>
> Interviewer: Is that because you were becoming more comfortable with the situation yourself or was it because his attitude was actually changing anyway?
>
> Fiona: I suppose I was more comfortable but at the same time I think that he maybe put on a front for the first month or two that you knew your place, this was his position and this was your position and you don't cross the line. Whereas when it came to it later in the year the boundaries would have been fuzzier in a way [Fiona, Interview 3].

For other participants, Liam and Olivia particularly, support from their respective principals was somewhat less than forthcoming. In Liam's case, physical proximity to the principal's office failed to compensate for an aloof leadership style:

> Liam: ……..even though I am directly across the way from the office, there was very little interaction, very little occasions where he [principal] was calling in or requesting anything [Interview 3].

Olivia's situation was equally isolating. In the midst of the micropolitics surrounding the appointment of a permanent teacher in her school, Olivia feels *fobbed off* and frustrated when her principal fails to provide her with feedback following her unsuccessful interview for the position, despite her repeated request that he do so.

> Olivia: But for any question I have I just never get an answer.
>
> Interviewer: From your principal?
>
> Olivia: Never, no and I think I mentioned in one of my emails to you as well, there was an interview in school [for a permanent position] and I went

> for it and I asked for [interview] feedback twice now and he has just not given me feedback. I find that very frustrating. I am over it now but for the week or two after the interview I just didn't enjoy going into school as much because I was going, come on like can I have some feedback just for my next..... you are fobbed off and I found that frustrating [Interview 1].

The various emotional reactions of beginners, arising from their perception of how they were supported by their respective principals, resonates with the view that the organisational structure of the school guides teachers' emotional conduct and shapes their perception of appropriate expressions (Zembylas 2003a; Price 2012). Thus, emotions are performances within the prevailing power relations and rules, through which particular identities may or may not appear, and therefore emotions play an important role in teacher identity.

5.4 Fellow beginners: '…..we would freak each other out'

Interactions between the beginners participating in my study and fellow beginners, both inside and outside of their schools, elicited a range of emotions. Reflecting the experience of beginners studied elsewhere (e.g. Corbin 2010, p. 56; McNally 2010, p. 69), Fiona's account, detailing collaboration and mutual support among beginners in the same school, typifies the general situation:

> Yes we were very supportive of each other in that we would all take a look at each other's folders, even certain ideas, certain lessons that we would be doing or covering. I know that myself and the 4th class teacher [a fellow beginning] would have done a fair few of the same lessons and I suppose..... if there was something you found you would always share it [Fiona, Interview 3].

However, even within a collaborative culture of this kind, Fiona admits that relationships among beginners possess a competitive edge: *It is competitive; especially when you know there is a job position* [permanency]…….*you'd drive each other*... [Fiona, Interview 3].

Anxiety inducing, competitive individualism, to some degree an overhang from student teaching days, but principally a function of the inherent performativity of the probationary process, characterised interactions among some beginners. A number of beginners coped with the resultant pressures by simply ceasing to engage professionally with fellow beginners. For example, fearing that the efforts of fellow beginners were of a higher standard than her own work, Geraldine ceased examining their probationary-related work schemes:

> I felt that even looking at others schemes made me worried that mine weren't good enough. So I felt that it was actually better not to look at them [Geraldine, Interview 3].

Similarly, anxiety arising from the decontextualised, performative perfectionism of the probationary process caused Bernadette and a beginning colleague, who taught just *20 miles away,* to cease having meaningful professional interactions of any kind. Even their being visited by the same Inspector failed to inculcate a sense of common purpose among these two good friends:

> …… I would actually be afraid to see her schemes because I think if I looked at hers and she looked at mine we would freak each other out and we both agreed it is not a good idea. I'd be like; I don't have that done, should I do that? Or where did you get that idea? I didn't see that, what website was that on? And I just don't want to go there. You do your thing, you do your template, I will do my template. And we both have the same inspector…….. [Bernadette, Interview 2].

Disengagement on Bernadette's part also applied to her continuing participation at the series of NIPT-organised workshops held at a local Education Support Centre. Already frustrated by what she judged to be the *airy fairy* nature of the induction programme, having to attend the NIPT workshops with fellow beginners, who were all deeply involved in the probationary process, was a source of considerable stress. Consequently, Bernadette ceased attending:

> …….. you were in your groups with these five other teachers and everyone was so stressed and everyone had to get their Dips [probated] and oh my God. And I was like, this is like being back in college…… I just hated Mondays, I really did and eventually I just kind of stopped going [Bernadette, Interview 2].

Olivia also failed to engage in any meaningful way with either of two fellow beginning colleagues. Disappointed at not securing a permanent position in her school mid-way through the beginning year, her subsequent relationship with the particular colleague who secured the permanency was characterised by a considerable degree of antipathy. Also noticeable in the following interview extract is that Olivia and her beginning colleague attend separate NIPT induction workshops in the local Education Centre. Individualism, it seems, is also a dominant characteristic of induction practices:

> Interviewer: What is the nature of your interactions with your fellow beginning colleague? Do you interact with him on a professional level with regard to your mutual interest in the probationary process and so on?
>
> Olivia: Not particularly, he is doing the [NIPT organised] induction course as well but he is in a different group to me and we have never been at the same one together. And then when it came to planning at the beginning of the year I said I have a template and he said he had a template so we actually never ended up showing each other our template.
>
> Interviewer: What do you think is the reason for that non interaction?
>
> Olivia: On my part it is probably like you got my job, in my own head [Interview 2].

When engagement between Olivia and her beginning colleagues does occur, day-to-day workplace banter, frequently centred on her colleagues exploitation of Olivia's probationary-related nervousness, substitutes for even the most cursory forms of professional engagement:

> Interviewer: In relation to the other two beginners, did you have much involvement with them in discussing with each other what the inspector would expect. Did you have professional conversations around induction or probation or preparation or anything?
>
> Olivia: It would only be casual conversations, like they were both from [county name] so they would say, 'oh an inspector came to this school and this school,' kind of scaremongering. And that he [inspector] was making his way up to [region where their school located], so I chose not to believe any of it and it didn't transpire to be true. But that would be the type of conversation……the way you would talk to other members of staff, oh the Dip [probationary process] is killing me or whatever, nothing specific. Or, oh I have this on this weekend, how am I going to do my planning? [Olivia, Interview 3].

An issue which proved emotive for some beginners, who had graduated from a long-established provider of initial teacher education, was the presence in their midst of beginning colleagues who were graduates of either Hibernia College (a blend of online and face-to-face tuition) or had graduated from a college in the UK. An important element of the rationale for the introduction of a blended online initial teacher education programme centres on encouraging a broader range of people to consider primary school teaching as a profession, by providing a more flexible route to becoming a fully qualified teacher. Liam, however, has reservations about whether an online mode of delivery can adequately prepare candidates for a career in teaching:

> ……it doesn't make sense to me doing something over a computer that involves working with people. You could do a training degree over the internet say in something like interior design but when you are engaged with children and kids and education it doesn't make sense that you are not going to hands on training college. At the same time it [traditional model of ITE] could be a lot better, it could be more practical and more workshops and whatever. But the [online] Hibernia course and computers for me, just sitting at a computer with forms would just be a definite no no. I wouldn't have the discipline to keep it up [Liam, Interview 1].

Bernadette is untroubled by the delivery mode *per se.* Instead, her reservations centre on a lack of discrimination on the part of those responsible for hiring decisions in schools. Having been assured, prior to graduation, that her traditionally delivered

course of initial teacher preparation was superior to equivalent courses elsewhere and, therefore, conferred an employability advantage, Bernadette feels somewhat disillusioned by the realities prevailing in the marketplace:

> ……'you will be the first to walk into jobs', 'you are the best trained', but realistically people are walking into jobs from wherever they do their training [Bernadette, Interview 3].

Fiona is exercised by what she perceives as a dilution in the quality of the teaching force, resulting from the presence of second-career beginning teachers in schools. Fully wedded to the concurrent model of initial teacher preparation, as representing the most reliable form of quality assurance, all other models of preparation, particularly if undertaken in the UK, represent, in Fiona's view, a diminution of quality among teachers:

> Fiona:……some of my friends or people older than me, they might say, 'oh my career in business didn't work, I will just become a teacher,' this sort of thing…….. there are so many ways to get into teaching now, how many courses can you do to become a teacher, these sort of things. Whereas all I ever wanted to do is what I went into straight away and I find it very insulting in a way in that somebody has lived their life, not so much lived their life but gone down one path, realised it didn't work for them and decided all right I will fall back on teaching. And then they would be able to get a job because they would be deemed to be more experienced; that sort of thing…….But even in terms of, and I have nothing against it, but you can go to England or Scotland or Wales, get your teaching degree and come back home but your level of Irish isn't going to be as good unless you are from an Irish home or unless you speak Irish at home. And that is a huge part of the curriculum. And it is as you take these pieces away there is not going to be much left……..I am very much against just doing teaching because it is what is left over…… and if you think of it, how many ways can you become a doctor? Not many [Fiona, Interview 3].

Data presented in respect of fellow beginners, both inside and outside of participants' schools, clearly illustrates that the issue of beginning colleagues has the potential to elicit a range of deeply felt emotions among those participating in my study.

5.5 Parents: '….the notion of having to talk to parents….'

Among participants, parental contact is appreciated but described in somewhat guarded terms: *I had to ring two parents over the past fortnight and I was very nervous doing so but they were very understanding, both times regarding homework* [Fiona, e-mail, September 2010]. Principally, insecurity causes beginners to approach the prospect of having to meet parents with some trepidation, *the night before; I was dreading it* [Olivia, Interview 2]. These fears, usually, prove unfounded, as in a majority of cases, parent teacher meetings prove to be positive occasions:

> ……. I thought I would be given out to [admonished] but I wasn't, I don't know why I thought I would be given out to but I just went in with a certain degree of nervousness thinking someone is going to say something to me, someone is not going to be happy. But no, they were all fine [Danielle, Interview 2].

Beginners find that hosting parent teacher meetings demands deployment of a considerable range of skills on their part:

> ….the main issue I have with them [meetings] is the timing, knowing what to say and what not to say, and more importantly, how to say what I want to say without being offensive or being taken up wrongly [Fiona, e-mail, November 2010].

As a result, almost inevitably, initial teacher education is frequently blamed for not providing enough training for parental contact: *The parents/guardians are another occupational hazard that you are not warned about in college* [Danielle, e-mail, June 2011].

Participants were of the view that parent teacher meetings were potentially stressful occasions *especially when you have to give them* [parents] *a bit of bad news* [Niall, Interview 3] with respect to the progress of their child. Resonating with the view that performative discourses deny the caring aspects of teaching (O'Connor 2008) and

mirroring concerns expressed by teachers and principals of the potential negative impact on children of critical report writing (Hall et al. 2008), beginners maintained that report writing in general, and delivering standardised test results in particular, is stressful due to the potential impact a poor result has on the self-esteem of pupils, and, indeed, their parents. Anchored in her own childhood experience, Fiona is acutely aware of the potential negative effects that attach to report writing, both immediate and longer term:

> …….just knowing that I still have mine from when I was in primary school, they are something that stick with you the whole time and if you get a great report, then fabulous. If you don't, then it causes parents stress and worry over the summer, will they do well next year or does my child's attitude have to change, these sorts of things. They make a huge impact on people's lives, even if it means just ticking a box to you [Fiona, Interview 3].

Also presenting as a source of stress, and resonating with the twin notions of visibility and vulnerability (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a), was how disimproved standardised test scores reflect on the beginning teacher……..*you do take it to heart* [Danielle, Interview 3]. The following extracts relate to interviews undertaken at the end of the school year i.e. when most primary schools administer standardised tests in literacy and numeracy. Consequently, beginners were particularly sensitive to how the results of these summative tests would be interpreted by others, and of the implications of these interpretations for their beginning reputations:

> Niall: I was a bit worried that if they all do awfully in the [standardised] test it would obviously look very bad on me [Interview 3].

> Geraldine: I found it a bit worrying coming up to the Drumcondra and the Sigma-T [standardised tests in literacy and numeracy respectively]…….. : I found it a little worrying that if the kids had gone down [achieved lower scores] how would it reflect on me and things like that……. they'd think that I didn't do a very good job [Interview 3].

More generally, Geraldine's anxiety is illustrative of why basing quality control systems primarily on students' test scores, is felt by many teachers to constitute an unfair evaluation of their work, doing injustice to their specific working conditions as well as to their professional commitment (Kelchtermans 2008, p. 32)

Particularly noteworthy in the following extract, apart from Olivia's anxiety as to how she should best *explain* disimproved test scores to particular parents, is that parents, generally, disregarded her attempts to champion the benefits of her class-based formative test regime. Instead, their singular attention was focused on the year-on-year standardised test performance of their child:

> Olivia:…the STEN results have been very good so I am getting very positive feedback…….. they just wanted to see an improvement, they just wanted proof of an improvement. And then I was saying it is not a test of all they have learned during the year, I had all their weekly results from the weekly maths test and weekly things like that and they were not interested. All they wanted to know……. the majority of people [pupils] went up and some stayed the same, which was fine, some people went down by a STEN of 1. And when I saw them [parents] coming in I was going, oh my God how do I explain that……. And all the teachers in the staffroom had said it is not a reflection on you. But I know that some of the parents viewed it that way [Olivia, Interview 3].

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These insights are of particular relevance in an era of increased mandatory standardised testing in primary schools in Ireland (DES 2011a, 2011b, 2012a; Conway 2013; Conway and Murphy 2013). As in other spheres of human activity, of particular interest in this context are the unintended consequences of policy development, particularly in respect of the induction of beginning teachers.

Contact with parents may also be experienced as demanding and sometimes difficult.

Parents' negative attitudes, for instance, may have a great impact on the teacher (Aspfors and Bondas 2013). In particular, strong feelings occur when beginning teachers' competence and expertise are questioned or criticised by parents.

Frequently, emotive exchanges between teacher and parent centre on the issue of homework, long a distinctive feature of primary schooling in Ireland. Geraldine felt particularly aggrieved as she thought she was being singled out due to her inexperience:

> ….. I had a parent that came into me that said that her daughter was after spending four hours doing the homework. And I was shocked because I had the homework so structured……But it was the way the mother had spoken to me……I kind of felt she was speaking to me because she knew I was a new teacher, did she feel that she was telling me how to do it? ……..And I just found it very upsetting……. I really felt that it was a personal attack because this parent knew that I was new and she wouldn't have questioned the experienced teacher……. [Geraldine, Interview 1].

Also dissatisfied with the homework performance of a pupil in her class, Fiona contacted the child's parents by means of a written note. In this instance, the child's mother objected to the chosen means of communication, much to Fiona's surprise, even shock:

> …….I wrote a note home saying could you ever remind him [pupil] that the homework is very important and it is not acceptable to not do the homework ….. And the young fellow came up to me and said, 'my mum refused to sign the note because she thinks you should have rung her.' ……that did kind of shake me up a bit [Fiona, Interview 2].

Since, in teaching, the person of the teacher is always deeply involved when a teacher's decision-making is being challenged, it equates, in the teacher's mind, to a questioning of professional and personal integrity (Kelchtermans 2008, p. 32). Yet, while keeping parents at a distance might protect beginning teachers from criticism, it also insulates them from parental appreciation and support, which would energise, contribute to creativity and erode stress. Morgan et al. (2009) emphasise that the

absence of positive experiences undermines commitment and efficacy more than the occurrence of negative events. Additionally, frequency is more influential than the intensity of the experiences.

For some beginners, age difference presents difficulties when meeting parents. Bernadette feels somewhat burdened by the personal nature of the information some parents, for a variety of reasons, are prepared to divulge to her. Being unable to readily relate, due to her relative youth, to what she was hearing, does not spare her from being confided in:

> Bernadette: I have had a few bad days. …….but this whole thing of, I don't know, I think because you are young.....I have this whole, 'now she started this... because me and the husband have gotten divorced. …….And I am 20 and I don't have a clue. Because one mother said to me one time, 'you don't know what it is like to be a single mother.' And I had to hold myself so hard. I didn't know what to say. And I just said, 'no I don't, tell me about that.' And then she went on about it and got it all out of her system and then she backed down and that was it. So sometimes you kind of..... [Bernadette, Interview 3].

In relation to developing the self-confidence necessary to deal professionally with parents, Fiona believes she has to overcompensate for her youthful appearance:

> The main difficulty about being an NQT is the confidence when dealing with parents, especially when they feel they are putting their children under the guidance of such a young looking and inexperienced teacher [Fiona, e-mail, October 2010].

Additionally, Fiona feels that her youthful appearance means that she lacks the gravitas necessary to be treated by parents in the same professional manner as her senior colleagues. Being addressed by her first name by, admittedly, a minority of parents lends credence to her inkling:

> Fiona: One or two parents would say, like they might call you by your first name where you would expect them to say Miss Skelly (pseudonym) or whatever, they would say, 'oh Mary (pseudonym), how are you getting

> on?' Something like that...……I couldn't imagine that happening with an older member of staff, I just couldn't see it happening [Interview 2].

By the end of the beginning year, Fiona is conscious that, despite her relative youthfulness, she has had a considerable volume of responsibility thrust upon her quite suddenly:

> Fiona: I suppose you are conscious that you are young yourself and that you might not be, I suppose in my own head I consider myself still as a student myself, still in the learning process and then having to talk to a parent about how your [their] child is doing after you [they] have known them for eight years and I have only known them since September. It just seemed a bit daunting because you are expected to know the child in and out and how they are physically and mentally and how they are at getting on with school when the parent knows the child a lot better than you do……..And so you were thrust into an adult role, I mean you are an adult but in your head you are only at the beginning of something; you were thrust into that role quite suddenly. And you are expected to know what you are doing by thirty parents [Fiona, Interview 3].

Fiona's sense of her new reality is of being very much in a liminal space but equally of being obliged to discharge her professional responsibilities to parents, despite what emotions she might be experiencing due to her rapidly changing circumstances.

5.6 Inspector: 'I don't think I could go through all this again'

Emotions are bound up with individual experiences of the political and of power within the system (Hargreaves 2001, p. 1057). Beginning teaching, in particular, is a period during which practices are subject to surveillance, dissected and publicly discussed; an experience, in other words, where 'others' commonly 'look in'. Interpreting their visitations in evaluative rather than supportive terms, Fiona, for instance, is unnerved by the frequency with which her practice is observed by more powerful 'others' throughout her beginning year:

> There is constant worry, for want of a better word, of somebody coming into the classroom and just observing you, it is kind of like being on teaching practice again. Because not only does the inspector come in but

> the principal comes in as well and our mentor might come in and watch us as well so you have to be on top game the whole time [Fiona, Interview 2].

As with beginners elsewhere (e.g. Aspfors and Bondas 2013), for the participants in this study, a principal source of the emotionality characterising their beginning year lay outside the school. This study uncovered ample evidence that the two, primarily evaluative, probationary-related visits, which all beginners received from a member of the DES Inspectorate, shaped the emotional tone of the beginning year to a significant extent. Resonating with the emotional impact of inspection generally (Perryman 2007), the inherent tension of awaiting an inspectorial visit proved to be a significant source of stress for all participants. Ruth's mid-year communication typifies their thoughts:

> The waiting is actually annoying - not knowing when she [inspector] is coming is quite tiring! Survival is my motto at the moment. So much to do all the time, it's hard to switch off. I just have my fingers crossed I do get my dip [be successfully probated] – I don't think I could go through all this again. Very uplifting e-mail I know…! [Ruth, e-mail, January 2011]

In an attempt to lessen her stress levels by encouraging her inspector to conclude the probationary visitation process as expeditiously as possible, Ruth, exceptionally, decided to 'talk back':

> When she [inspector] came the second last time [to visit a beginning colleague] I was like, 'oh so you are going to come back to me soon.' I was probably a bit cheeky and she said, 'no I won't be here tomorrow.' And I was like, 'next week?' 'I don't think so.' And I was like, 'the week after?' And she was like, 'I actually don't know, I will see you before the end of the month.' And I was like, obviously… I was mad [angry] [Ruth, Interview 3].

As the prospect of an inspectorial visit drew ever closer, particularly in the second half of the school year, participants experienced considerable levels of probationary-related stress. Resonating with the emotionality uncovered by Marsh and Lammers (2011) in relation to another aspect of school life, i.e. being male and participating in

school literacy, much beginner communication was laced with emotions and feelings as they described having to await an inspectorial visitation. Words and phrases such as *ridiculous, tiredness, nerve-wracking, fear of the unknown, anxiety, mini breakdown, criticism,* and *feeling the pressure* exemplify the inherent emotionality of the probationary process as traditionally transacted in primary schools in Ireland. While awaiting an inspection visit, most participants experienced prolonged periods of low-level stress, with resulting attritional effects. Oisín's mid-year communication typifies the experience:

> I'm still waiting for the inspector to arrive. I received a [group] email on Friday from the inspector saying that if we had not yet had a visit from him, then we were due one soon. Therefore, more preparation than usual was done for the lessons. But he has yet to arrive; and waiting is causing a bit of stress for me and the other two teachers on probation in the school - i.e. later nights preparing for lessons and earlier mornings, causing tiredness and less energy during the day [Oisín, e-mail, February 2011].

In Geraldine's case, her growing self-confidence as a teacher is blighted by anxieties surrounding the probationary process. Viewing the process exclusively in evaluative terms, pressures arising from the prospect of having to perform for an inspector at a moments notice have obliterated any inclination, on Geraldine's part, to experiment or engage in adventurous pedagogy. No longer allowing lessons to *progress naturally and have more fun with the children,* Geraldine, preoccupied by *a fear of the unknown,* instead speculates as to how she may fare during her impending inspectorial visit. Also readily obvious from Geraldine's communication is how she positions herself vis-à-vis the inspector. Her relative powerlessness causes her to wonder about *how he will treat me* and *the criticism* [she] *will receive*:

> While I feel more in control of my teaching and more on top of my planning, I have found this term more nerve-wracking as I am awaiting supervision. I am finding prep. for each day taking longer. I think it is a fear of the unknown, not knowing who the supervisor [inspector] is, when

> he will come, exactly what he wants, how he will treat me, the criticism I will receive etc. I find this anxiety is having an effect on my teaching. For example, I am feeling the pressure and if a lesson isn't going exactly how I had expected I am thinking how it would look if the supervisor was here, whereas before I would allow a lesson to progress naturally and have more fun with the children in the process. I am hoping that once I have my first visit it will relieve this [Geraldine, e-mail, February 2011].

Bernadette, who generally revelled in her first teaching post, also experienced considerable probationary-related stress, particularly as she awaited the first of her two inspectorial visits. Despite having *everything great* and *lesson plans perfect*, in a performative arena, waiting for judgement day is what proves most stressful:

> Oh yes, I did have a little mini breakdown there for four days, I admit. I was like, she [inspector] is going to have to come to me before Paddy's [St. Patrick's Day, March 17th] and there is no way..... and I had everything great, all lesson plans perfect for up to Paddy's Day thinking she was going to come. And she didn't come. And then the week after Paddy's I was like, she has to come this week…… And the first week after Paddy's it went to Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, but then I went off, I just left it all……[Bernadette, Interview 2].

Instead of focusing, in an uninterrupted manner, on developing their beginning practice, beginners constantly drew comparisons between their own rate of progress through the probationary process and that of other beginners known to them; fellow beginners in their own schools, colleagues from their initial teacher education programme or fellow beginners encountered at the NIPT-organised induction workshops. Little, if any, mention was made of what had transpired during these inspection visits. What was of most importance was that they had taken place; a case of product trumping process. What beginners found particularly galling was when a fellow beginner with less overall teaching experience, benefiting from the quirks of fate, proceeded more expeditiously through the probationary process:

> Everyone else [fellow beginners], people that had less days than me, people who were only there since January, had two visits and were done [Bernadette, Interview 2].

As a consequence, beginners speculated continuously as to the whereabouts of the inspector. The sense of pressure increases as the inspector moves ever closer: *Since coming back to school, there was huge pressure as the Inspector for the Dip was in a neighbouring school* [Fiona, e-mail, February, 2011]. Symptomatic of the anxiety laden nature of the probationary process is the level of sentry duty undertaken by both beginners themselves and by school colleagues on their behalf. Located in a pre-fabricated classroom at the side of the school playground, Olivia frequently feels *forgotten about.* She welcomes the relative isolation in one respect though. Assured that her two beginning colleagues *would be watching for him,* not having to personally observe the arrival of the inspector at the school proves to be *a bit more relaxing* [Olivia, Interview 3]. In Danielle's case, however, the unexpected arrival of an inspector causes her to react very differently. On being informed by the school secretary, via internal phone, that the inspector had arrived in her school, the visceral nature of Danielle's physiological reaction is readily apparent:

> …… I have a phone in my classroom and I was well into my Irish lesson and the phone rang…….. And the secretary rang up and said, 'he is here.' And basically when I get a shock my ears go deaf and I just go into auto pilot. You would be in shock because all of a sudden it is like... [Danielle, Interview 3].

The degree of anxiety, evidenced in this vignette, is hardly conducive to meaningful development as an early-career teacher. Additionally, the fact that the series of two inspectorial visits did not conclude until the final days of the beginning year, proved stressful for those beginners who deemed themselves to be out of luck with respect to an expeditious transaction of the process:

> My visits were so late, I didn't get my first visit until March and I didn't get my last visit until June. So I remember the week before my first visit and the week before my second visit I was cracking…….. I had

> something ridiculous, eight days left [in the school year] and I was just.....oh this is ridiculous [Bernadette, Interview 3].

Foreshadowing the planned withdrawal of the DES Inspectorate from the probationary process (DES 2012c; Teaching Council 2013), beginning teachers are no longer briefed in groups by individual members of the inspectorate at the beginning of the school year. As a result, beginners are left to second guess the primarily evaluative intentions of the inspector during the early months of their beginning year, leading to *a lot of anxiety and uncertainty* [Geraldine, e-mail, March 2011]. As reported by participants, contact between the Inspectorate and the NIPT is largely non-existent, as evidenced by the failure of a majority of inspectors to acknowledge attendance by beginners participating in my study at NIPT-organised workshops. Additionally, consistent with its supportive philosophy, the NIPT does not incorporate an evaluative component into its workshop programme. As a result, attendance, on the part of probationers, at the series of NIPT-organised induction workshops, fails to assuage their probationary-related anxieties. With obvious implications for how induction and probation are transacted in the future, under the auspices of the Teaching Council and school principals (Teaching Council 2013), the cumulative effect of a failure to dovetail the primarily evaluative activities of the Inspectorate and the supportive activities of the NIPT, leaves beginners vulnerable to the anxiety inducing effects of disjointed, balkanised thinking.

In the aftermath of the first of two inspection visits, participants enjoyed a boost in self-confidence and a temporary respite from the anxieties of the probationary process: *I was like, 'thanks be to God'. Because I don't think I could have done another week* [Bernadette, Interview 2]. Aware that other beginners may not be so

lucky, soon after the post-Christmas return to school, with *everything up to date in my folder,* Olivia was *delighted he* [inspector] *came; a lot of people are still living on the edge but I am a lot calmer now* [Olivia, Interview 2].

When the probationary process finally concludes, the sense of relief among participants is palpable. Olivia's reaction is typical: *I am delighted and relieved. It is such a weight off my shoulders. It is fantastic*! [Olivia, e-mail, May 2011]. While anxiety inducing, once the process concluded, a number of participants, much like Niall, deemed the probationary undertaking *a very nerve-wracking but positive experience* [Niall, e-mail, June 2011]. Equally, despite being *put on the spot more than once,* the very positive feedback received by Geraldine meant that *all the hard work was worth it* [Geraldine, e-mail, May 2011]. In her final interview, in espousing, the virtues of a rigorous approach to planning, while not shirking exposing the worst aspects of performativity, Geraldine provides a balanced and comprehensive assessment of her probationary-related experiences:

> I do feel that I learned a lot from it and I do feel that it made me a better teacher in the way that I had to sit down and do my planning really well and I did learn a lot about what worked for me and what didn't work for me. So I did find it good in that sense. But it also causes a whole lot of anxiety, just the whole nature of it, the fact that every day that you go in - you never know if that is the day. So I felt like I had to be prepared every single day. I know not everyone would be as anxious as me about things. I found it very stress inducing just because I felt like..... now it worked out very well for me and now I love the system but at the time the thing I found most stressful is that I knew I was working really hard and I knew I was putting a lot of effort into it and I knew the children were learning a lot and my biggest fear was that he [inspector] might come in on a bad day. It might be a bad day for him, a bad day for the kids, maybe it wasn't my best lesson and I just felt would whatever he saw reflect the work I had done [Geraldine, Interview 3].

Hopefully, having successfully negotiated the exactitudes of the probationary process, Geraldine's admission to *love the system* is not symptomatic of Stockholm syndrome!

5.7 Conclusion

Among beginners participating in my study, as with new teachers elsewhere (Aspfors and Bondas 2013), teachers' emotions and the relational dynamics that trigger them, have been highlighted as crucial in the beginning year. Deepening an understanding, in an Irish context, of beginners' emotional experiences during their initial phase of being a teacher, four broad-based claims catch sight of some important factors and noteworthy implications.

Firstly, while being nurtured as a new teacher by colleagues is common; my study unearths tensions arising from the individualism, characteristic of veteran-oriented professional cultures, prevalent in primary schools in Ireland. Nurturance principally involves signs of consideration extended by colleagues and principals to beginners. Participants, for the most part, are nurtured in this particular way. There are, however, cases that point to, while not the opposite, at least an assumption on the part of principals (and senior colleagues), particularly with respect to class allocation, that beginners can be allocated the most onerous responsibilities in the school from the very outset. Resonating with the experiences of beginners elsewhere, help may be afforded, but not with everything (McCormack and Thomas 2003). Thus, school leadership was found to be particularly influential in determining the emotional nature of beginning to teach. Left to figure out how to navigate and integrate the emotional aspects on their own (Geijsel and Meijers 2005 cited in Luehmann 2007; Mayer 2011), when arriving in a new workplace, post-graduation, beginning teachers needed to make sustained efforts to succeed as a teacher. As a result, as the hosting of parent teacher meetings, for instance, demands deployment of a considerable range of skills on the part of beginners, parental contact was appreciated but described in somewhat guarded terms.

Secondly, while the prevailing individualistic school cultures ensured that collaborative practice was limited and sporadic, my study unearths a tension here as beginners, motivated to forge their own reputations as teachers, frequently prefer to determine the degree and nature of their engagements with colleagues. Of particular interest, in this respect, are that interactions among fellow beginning teachers, elicited a range of emotions. Collaboration and mutual support between beginners in the same school, typified the general situation. However, frequently, relationships among beginners possessed a competitive edge, as anxiety inducing, competitive individualism, to some degree an overhang from student teaching days, but principally a function of the performativity characteristic of the probationary process, characterised interactions among some beginners.

Thirdly, the experiences of beginners participating in my study reveal that, in relation to interacting with pupils, the regulation of emotions or emotional labour are important issues in the first year. In this regard, my study points to a tension between the joy of being a caring teacher and the exhaustion that arises from high levels of commitment. In line with others (e.g. Flores and Day 2006), facilitating pupils in their learning and development affords great meaning and satisfaction amongst the participants. These positive experiences seem to compensate for and help beginners to navigate tougher periods and experiences. Resonating with Bahia et al. (2013) it seems that interacting with pupils at the level of the classroom trigger emotions related to an ethic of care, whereas when obliged to engage at a more systemic level, beginners activate emotions related to the profession of teaching. This distinction suggests, albeit tentatively, the possibility of different emotional identities related to

teaching that result in different concerns and intensities of emotions and feelings. Privileging images of the 'good teacher' (Conway et al. 2012) as someone who primarily acts as 'facilitator' (Fenstermacher and Soltis 2009), classroom situations devoted to pupil well-being and learning are where positive emotions are most experienced, whereas, for instance, issues relating to the probationary process which impact, even interfere, directly in the classroom, trigger emotions of a more negative kind.

Fourthly, as with beginners elsewhere (e.g. Aspfors and Bondas 2013), for those participating in my study, a principal source of the emotionality characterising their beginning year lay outside the school. In this respect, my study uncovered ample evidence that the two, primarily evaluative, probationary-related visits, shaped the emotional tone of the beginning year to a significant extent. Ironically, as the intensity of the inspectorial regime wanes, in light of new probationary arrangements outlined in the *Droichead* initiative (Teaching Council 2013), the inexorable rise of new accountabilities (Conway 2013; Conway and Murphy 2013) may trigger sufficient levels of anxiety among beginners to more than adequately fill the void. If such a scenario proves true, images of the 'good teacher' may be obliged to privilege the skill set and attitudes of an 'executive' rather than a 'facilitator' (Fenstermacher and Soltis 2009), with consequent implications for the shaping of beginners' emotional identities.

The following chapter, Chapter 6, is devoted to the temporo-spatial dimension of beginning teacher identity shaping.

Chapter 6: Temporo-spatiality & the shaping of beginner teacher identity

As outlined previously in this account, Ericksonian-led perspectives stressed the enduring and singular nature of identity (Wetherell 2010, p. 6). More recently, however, identity is conceived of as being dynamic, plural and fluid (e.g. Holland et al. 1998). As a result, with both temporal and spatial connotations in mind, acts of identification constitute temporary and arbitrary moments of closure. Thus, with respect to the focus of my study, the ongoing renegotiation of beginning teacher identity places participation in practices in a temporal context. Additionally, conceived of as a 'space of authoring' (Holland et al. 1998) for emergent professional selves, the initial year of teaching represents an important liminal or boundary space wherein beginning teachers *invent* themselves through processes of 'trial and error' (Corbin et al. 2010, p. 95). In negotiating the movement *between training college and reality* [Fiona, e-mail, September 2010], the beginner is positioned between one way of being and another, new way (McNamara et al. 2002).

Uneven and unpredictable, and far from being a narrative of triumphs, the initial year of teaching, post-graduation, is a transformational time for beginners, a period of continuous adjustments to new situations, and the accompanying constraints and opportunities imposed on one's identity in its ongoing shaping. In this manner, the beginning year frequently constitutes a kind of liminal vortex of affectively dominated challenging events, and provisional gains and losses (Corbin et al. 2010; Stronach 2010). As a result, inkeeping with a situative perspective on the shaping of identity, through my deployment of a multiple-case design, involving nine beginning

teachers in nine different workplaces, the liminal space of the initial year of teaching is conceived of in this study as a pivotal transition point with the potential for significant learning (McNamara et al. 2002; Cook-Sather 2006).

While patterned through being partly shared, beginning teaching is also a different experience for each beginner, arising from the particular context in which they teach, but also, as a function of history-in-person (Holland and Lave 2009), each beginner brings to a particular context various deep rooted preconceptions about the nature of teaching and learning, and their own set of dispositions and expectations about how to develop professionally. As a result, increasingly, rather than propagating uniform representations of beginning practice, research undertakings, in uncovering a more subtle and nuanced reality, acknowledge the significant degree of variation characterising beginning teaching. On the one hand, as learning is fruitfully viewed as an ongoing, participative process rather than as a series of discrete acquisition events (Hager and Hodkinson 2009), the shaping of beginning identity is understood in terms of an increasing capacity for acting in flexible, constructive and innovative ways, appropriate to the challenges of ever-changing circumstances (e.g. Spalding et al. 2011). On the other hand, the development of beginning teachers is conceived of as uneven, uncertain and unfinished (e.g. Floden and Clark 1988; Thomas and Beauchamp 2011; Sinner 2012); in short, learning to teach is viewed as being frequently 'out of joint' (Britzman 2007, p. 1).

While, unavoidably, variance exists among research participants, among beginning teachers studied by LaBoskey (1994) and Johnson (2012a, p. 112), the general characteristics seem to be more significant to an understanding of how beginning

teacher identity is shaped than are individual differences within the participant cohort i.e. while the details of individuals' stories differ, the themes are similar. Thus, while cognisant of the importance of the singularities of experience, and of the need to avoid the fantasy of the *average experience* (Stronach 2010, p. 197), with research, policy making, and beginning teacher preparation and induction agendas in mind, the focus in this chapter is on those aspects of practice deemed significant in complexifying nascent teaching identities rather than on the experiences of particular beginners *per se.* Yet teacher development can be understood only very loosely in either general or linear terms. Stage theories of teacher development, for instance, oversimplify the complex and multi-dimensional nature of learning to teach (Grossman 1992; Watzke 2007; Stronach 2010, p. 215). Ultimately, as Feiman-Nemser (2008) states, the beginning year of practice is "a messy problem space" (p. 697). It is unsurprising, therefore, that Smagorinsky et al. (2003) borrow Vygotsky's (1987) metaphor of the 'twisting path' to characterise the process of learning to teach. However, in characterising the complexities of concept development among prospective teachers, during the course of their initial teacher education programme, Smagorinsky et al. (2003) utilise the metaphor of the 'twisting path' in quite a specific, fine-grained way. By comparison, my wider, coarse-grained focus on aspects of beginning practice, during the induction stage of teacher education, post-graduation, constitutes is a more expansive utilisation of Vygotsky's (1987) metaphor.

In an attempt to communicate a sense of how beginning teachers wrestle with the complexities of practice, and with both temporal and spatial connotations in mind, I have chosen to sketch two 'twisting paths' journeyed by beginners as they learn to

teach. Charting these two, interrelated and overlapping, developmental journeys involves investigating, firstly, beginners' evolving sense of the complexity of teaching, and, secondly, examining the developmental nature of significant beginning experiences.

6.1 Beginners' evolving sense of the complexity of teaching

Among beginning teachers, how does a sense of the complexity of teaching evolve during the course of the initial year of practice, post-graduation? In facilitating an insight into aspects of practice which complexify the working lives of beginning teachers, and with the inherent messiness of beginning practice in mind (Feiman-Nemser 2008), three interrelated and overlapping experiential themes, all with temporo-spatial associations, are apparent among beginners participating in my study. Within these three domains of experience, beginners wrestle with the complexities of practice. In turn, these refer to beginners' experience of the organisational functioning of their school; beginners' experience of the unpredictability of the teaching design cycle; and, beginners' subjective experience of the passage of time. In the following account, an analytic distinction is made between these separable rather than separate aspects of an evolving sense of complexity.

6.1.1 Beginners' experience of the organisational functioning of their school

As schools are the principal organisational 'spaces' where society organises beginning teachers, and wherein their nascent identities are shaped, of central interest to my study is how beginning teachers experience the organisational functioning of their schools. Determined to a degree by the organisational context in which they find themselves, it is evident in the data set that beginning teachers quickly gain a sense of the complexity of school life and of the multi-dimensional nature of a teaching job.

The challenge not only concerns the transition into and management of the classroom environment but also the negotiation of a schools "bewildering organisational landscape" (Curry et al. 2008, p. 661). At the conclusion of her beginning year, Olivia's summation of how she had come to appreciate the complexities characterising the organisational landscape of her workplace, bears testament to this reality:

> ……I didn't imagine half the things that you are dealing with. I suppose you never think before you go into teaching, dealing with parents or other members of staff. I was just thinking, oh I will be with kids all day now and that kind of a thing. But there are so many other things going on; the way SNA's [Special Needs Assistants] are viewed and the way the SNA's view some of the teachers. And then the way the teachers view the principal and the way the principal views some teachers and the way the principal views the SNAs. I would never have known that, no one [beginner] would know anything about that world….. I didn't even know what an SNA was before I started teaching…….I never really thought about other staff really, just me and the children, and the children working away all day like [Olivia, Interview 3].

Yet, despite the importance of the school as an organisational entity, most research on beginning teachers has focused on problems directly related to classroom teaching. Much less attention has been paid to the fact that beginners also become members of an organisation (Schempp et al. 1993; Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a). To a significant extent, Ball (1987) suggests, the 'backstage realities' (p. 216) of organisational life are neglected by theorists and researchers because they are deterred by the messiness involved in the analysis of aspects of organisational functioning. Undeterred by the messiness involved, my research undertaking sought to establish how participants experienced the micro-political realities or "shady corners" (Orland-Barak and Maskit 2011) of their respective workplace settings.

Readily apparent from the data set, is that participants quickly realise that a central feature of beginning practice is learning how to cope with the fragmentations and frustrations of organisational life. A principal source of frustration for beginners, particularly in larger, urban-based schools, relates to working with others, particularly the many and changing colleagues who act as special educational needs teachers. Rotation or turnover among these teachers proves disruptive because colleagues, who act as either learning support or resource teachers, are those with whom beginners, potentially, are in closest contact on a daily basis; the less-than-ideal nature of that contact, as evidenced in Chapter 4, aside:

> Liam: The position of the learning support teacher has changed; three or four people have held that job, people coming and going in the school, maternity leaves, people coming in subbing, getting temporary jobs elsewhere, leaving; so it has actually been a bit of a headache [Interview 3].

Similarly, Ruth, in successfully articulating a sense of the resultant disjointedness, opines that mid-year changes to the job descriptions of colleagues are best described as *messy*:

> The other 5th class teacher stopped teaching about Christmas…..she went out to learning support [SEN post] and then the vice-principal went off on sick leave or something, so she ended up actually taking resource [specialised SEN post] and then when she [vice-principal] came back she ended up going back to resource as well, messy [Ruth, Interview 2].

Organisationally, the potential for disruptions of this kind is considerable as, from a low base in the 1990's, across the Primary and Post-Primary school systems, in addition to mainstream class and subject teachers, a combined total of 9,950 learning support and resource teachers currently provide additional support to learners (DES 2013). As the distinct features of teaching in particular jurisdictions are cultural in origin (Stigler and Hiebert 1999), a distinguishing feature of the Irish school system is the withdrawal of pupils from mainstream classes to receive additional educational

supports. As a consequence, the all too common scenario prevailing in Bernadette's class, and referred to previously in this account, whereby six pupils are withdrawn in different combinations at various times of the school day, by three different learning support teachers, proves to be a source of significant disruption. In addition to coping with disruptions caused by the regular withdrawal of pupils from class, a principal part of being socialised into the temporal rhythms of school life centre on learning how to cope with a myriad of other interruptions to planned class routines. For Bernadette, these interruptions are a daily occurrence:

> ……..the day to day situation it kind of does get a bit frustrating, when the boy with the *rolla book* [roll book] comes in, you could be in the middle of maths and then the *rolla book* comes in…. and parents collecting children for dental appointments and dropping them back, and 6th class in my school, they have this thing of emptying the classroom bins [waste recycling] …….. [Bernadette, Interview 1].

In sum, with obvious implications for the induction and mentoring of beginning teachers, in both origin and nature, the fragmentations experienced by participants, arising from the organisational functioning of their schools, resonate with the experiences of those studied by Schempp et al. (1993) who establish that the classroom responsibilities of inductees "had less to do with teaching children and more to do with juggling the multiple demands of a functioning institution" (p. 459). Yet, far from being subsumed by these multiple demands, beginners' agentic capabilities ensured that, while frustrated and annoyed by the level of disruption, they determinedly succeeded in negotiating the structural challenges of the workplace. As succinctly expressed by Liam, beginning practice is *a lot more than the teaching, the responsibilities kick in* [Interview 2].

6.1.2 Beginners' experience of the unpredictability of the teaching design cycle

Apart from the organisational functioning of their schools, what other domain of beginning practice is significant in complexifying practice during the induction year? The following subsections outline that while coping with the organisational functioning of their schools, beginners had to simultaneously grapple with the core components of classroom practice or the teaching design cycle, that is, planning, enacting, and assessing. With respect to these three stages of the teaching design cycle, the participants in my study manifested both sophisticated and disjointed qualities in varying degrees. In this way, they are not unlike the beginning teachers studied by Beck et al. (2007), who, despite struggling with the planning and assessment-related practicalities of their first year, displayed no lessening of commitment to constructivist, child-centred ideals. Liam's exclamation regarding *the unpredictability of it all* is an apt summation of the variance that lies at the heart of beginning practice, indeed all practice:

> You can try and predict what might happen……. …… I don't know, I think it is just the unpredictability of it all [Liam, Interview 3].

Aspects of the variance that defines beginner experience are treated in the following sub-sections.

6.1.2.1 Complicated, richer and sophisticated

In some respects, beginning teachers' thinking and practice is understood to be more complicated and far richer than traditionally thought, with aspects of beginners' teaching identities developing to the extent that their modes of working become more varied and sophisticated over time (Bullough et al. 2004; Flores 2006; Leshem 2008; Bauml 2009). Consistent with this view, Stronach (2010) is particularly struck by the

enormously rapid growth in complexity and range of early professional learning, evidenced in how quickly many beginning teachers develop a capacity to engage in "extended, situated, provisional, contingent and propositional reasoning" (p. 214). In this fashion, throughout their beginning year, many of the participants in my study moved towards a position of increasing sophistication. In doing so, as with the beginners studied by Bullough et al. (2004, p. 388), participants came to recognise teaching as a complex and difficult activity that, despite the challenges involved, they could practice skilfully. Fiona, for instance, succinctly captures the sense of how participants embrace their new responsibilities with self-confidence and assurance:

> ……you have to kind of take matters into your own hands. You kind of have to step up [Fiona, Interview 3].

Shifts towards more sophisticated understandings of elements of the teaching design cycle took many forms. The following fragments from the data set are representative. For Oisín, a growing self-assurance centred on how his approach to planning evolved:

> …….at the start I was always looking at the curriculum saying, 'how can I shape my lessons around the curriculum'? Now I am saying, 'how can I shape the curriculum around my lessons'? I always just think of something interesting or relevant and then I say 'is that in the curriculum'? I'd use it a lot less [Oisín, Interview 1].

Core principles of the Primary School Curriculum (DES 1999) are, firstly, the identification of possibilities for integrated learning within subjects and curriculum areas, and, secondly, the making of linkages throughout the curriculum as a whole. Despite some dismissiveness, *linkage and integration is very idealistic when you have five hundred things to be thinking of* [Ruth, Interview 1], from the outset, awareness existed among a majority of beginners of the desirability of introducing a greater degree of linkage and integration to their practice. In this regard, in outlining their

sometimes faltering enactive attempts, participants do not underestimate the degree of challenge involved. Geraldine's summation is typical:

> ……..it is not that my whole week would be integrated, I don't know if my planning is at that level yet [Geraldine, Interview 1].

Liam, also, appreciates the developmental nature of the process. To succeed in modifying his pedagogic approach, which he deems to be *too compartmentalised*, Liam realises that in attempting to incorporate the principles of linkage and integration into his practice, there is no substitute for experience:

> Most of the best ideas have kind of been too late, where I have seen linkages too late and maybe done, well topics or subjects at different times, but just from inexperience or whatever, I couldn't see that I could have directly linked them all in together [Liam, Interview 1].

While beginners grappled with developing their modes of working to become more varied and sophisticated over time, mirroring beginners studied by Bullough et al. (2004), participants' self-confidence and self-assurance was not motivated by a drive for certainty, resulting in a rigidity of approach or an overwhelming desire to shape the context of teaching to confirm oneself. Nor did increased self-confidence result in a robustness or competitiveness of stance, born of brashness or dogmatism on the part of beginners (Long et al. 2012). Instead, participants exhibited a tempered confidence and self-assurance grounded in a deepening understanding of teaching and of themselves as teachers.

6.1.2.2 Naivety, tolerance, and trial and error thinking

For all the feelings of increased confidence, of having taken, albeit faltering, steps forwards, as with beginners studied by Dodds (2010, p. 161), participants do not describe their momentum in terms of the entirely linear, but reflect instead on a

process that is suggestive of rehearsals, or of trial and error. This kind of trial and error thinking, described as 'thinking of thinking' (Stronach 2010, p. 212), equates to the kinds of thinking through which beginning teachers 'experiment' themselves into being and becoming. For instance, Geraldine's attempt at fostering a discovery learning approach, while mostly successful, also, occasionally, comes unstuck, obliging her to adopt a more directional approach:

> Interviewer: Did your teaching style evolve during the year in that you became more ambitious?
>
> Geraldine: Yes I do think there was a lot more discovery learning as it went on but I think it was something I was always aware of. I don't know if it was the children got more used to it or I got more used to it but they were kind of discovering what I wanted them to discover a lot better. But then again it doesn't always work, some days you have to tell them [Interview 3].

Even when a beginning teacher assesses their developmental trajectory as unproblematic and ever upward, overestimation, born of naivety, sometimes lies at the heart of their assessment of progress. Consistent with this view, Niall reports progressing from a didactic teaching style towards the adoption of more adventurous, active and discovery orientated pedagogic approaches:

> Active learning is proving to be a huge success in the classroom. Science experiments, making metre sticks, environmental trails have all been very enjoyable for the children as well as being easier for me. Instead of telling the children everything, by giving them the materials they need and some guidance they discover the knowledge themselves in a much more fun way than direct teaching [Niall, e-mail, February 2011].

Niall's progress report, however, appears naïve in light of recent research which stresses the importance of guidance, and establishes that unassisted discovery learning of the type described, is replete with pitfalls and does not benefit learners (Alfieri et al. 2011).

Oisín's *trial and error* thinking centres on how best to facilitate inclusive principles in his class:

> Interviewer: When you hear the word inclusion mentioned, what thoughts does it trigger in your mind?
>
> Oisín: Immediately I think of what to put into the lesson and how to teach everything so everyone will get it; the weaker half of the class, or the weaker quarter, or weaker eight. A lot of the time I don't know how properly to do that, I suppose it is trial and error in a way [Interview 1].

Here, Oisín displays a tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty, an ability to proceed without necessarily knowing. Equally, in Niall case, uncertainty, even paralysis, arises in relation to addressing issues surrounding the differing capabilities of pupils to grapple with the rote learning of spellings, a well-embedded cultural practice in many Irish primary schools. While adhering to the long established practice of the undifferentiated spelling test, Niall, nonetheless, is dissatisfied:

> Niall: …..when it comes to tests there is no real differentiation in my spelling tests anyway, they should all know them and I know it is harder for some of them but.....there are one or two who would struggle with spellings and haven't done well in spelling tests. But just because they struggle at spellings, I don't know; should I not give them a spelling test or what? I know it is probably not great for their confidence when they get a spelling test back with 3 out of 10 on it. But just because that is the case, should I not give them a spelling test? I don't know [Niall, Interview 1].

Despite being dissatisfied, much like Oisín, Niall displays an ability to tolerate unsatisfactory aspects of practice, especially given that the prevailing assessment practice *is probably not great for their confidence.* Though Oisín's capacity to implement the principles of inclusion will, almost certainly, improve with practice, Niall's reluctance to differentiate in favour of the small number of pupils who struggle with an undifferentiated spelling test, masked as *I don't know,* is more difficult to fathom. Though speculative, Niall's reluctance to amend his practice may be a function of the deep rooted influence of traditional practice or, alternatively, his

reluctance may be due to the fact that a differentiated spelling approach would demand a degree of additional preparatory effort on his part.

6.1.2.3 Uncertainty, unevenness, self-doubt and questioning

Experienced as *a steep learning curve* [Danielle, e-mail, December 2010], frequently, the process of beginning to teach, as evident in the previous sub-section, is fraught with uncertainty and unevenness, and characterised by periods of self-doubt and questioning (Floden and Clark 1988; Britzman 2003, 2007; Le Maistre and Paré 2010; McNally et al. 2010; Stronach 2010; Thomas and Beauchamp 2011; Sinner 2012). Feeling *completely at sea* at the outset of her beginning year [e-mail, September 2010], by mid year, Geraldine is continuing to grapple with issues of a fundamental kind:

> I actually find it hard to plan, I find it very confusing to look into the future; it is just not a strength of mine. I am just taking objectives from the curriculum and then I worry, am I being too broad, especially with Irish and English? [Geraldine, Interview 2].

While Geraldine's difficulties relate to planning, Olivia's mid-year travails centre on issues of implementation, particularly with respect to time management and the teaching of mathematics:

> Yes I find time management very difficult still, it is just they [subject lessons] all seem to run over, not so much Irish maybe, but maths always runs over time. At the moment we are doing renaming and I am finding that difficult because I didn't learn it that way myself so it takes me a while to kind of teach myself it and then I can see them looking at me. And now I know they are going home to the parents and the parents are like telling them to carry over, you know this whole thing, so it is taking way longer than I anticipated [Olivia, Interview 2].

Consistent with Borko (2004), meaningful learning is as slow and uncertain a process for teachers, as it is for students.

Among beginners, an additional source of uncertainty is a dawning realisation that educating children is a complex process that is only partly determined by intentional educational interventions (Kelchtermans 2011, p. 72). Despite effort and good intentions, successful learning outcomes remain uncertain:

> As the year progressed I noticed that even with increased attention some children still are very slow to respond and it now seems that it can be a continuous struggle to keep some individuals in touch with the entire class pace [Liam, e-mail, June 2011].

As a result, tensions often mentioned concern conflicts between what beginners' desire and what is possible in reality. Uncertainty arising from a realisation that limitations apply to one's competence or efficacy may be accompanied by feelings of helplessness, awareness of shortcomings and a questioning of the professional self (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a, p. 111; Bullough et al. 2004, p. 380; Orland-Barak and Maskit 2011, p. 439; Pillen et al. 2013a, 2013b, 2013c). And the more committed beginning teachers are, the greater the risk of disappointment. Olivia's disappointment results from her efforts to cope with diversity in her classroom:

> …….…. I might teach something or do loads of examples and then I want to go ahead with the ones I know are struggling and then suddenly someone else might be struggling and I am like, why are you struggling, ask your neighbour, I really need to help the other person. I find it hard to get to everyone who needs me in the course of a lesson. And I am always writing things down, oh I will go back to him and go back to him and I never get the time to go back to everything [Olivia, Interview 3].

Geraldine also finds coping with the range of abilities in her class to be so challenging that it constitutes *the most difficult part of school life:*

> The most difficult part of school life, I feel, is differentiating for the different abilities. It is hard to juggle keeping the well-able from being bored and the less-able from being overwhelmed. As well as hearing "Finished!" while other students are still pondering the first question [Geraldine, e-mail, May 2011].

Wider factors also influence pupil performance (Bullough et al. 2004, p. 380). In this regard, several beginning teachers expressed a sense of powerlessness in respect of pupils whom they could not help properly. With implications for learning how to balance job commitment and personal distance, Geraldine's experience in this regard is representative:

> ……..if they are tired coming into school it is such a disadvantage. And some of them are dealing with so much at home. There are children and I am sure they had more worries on their shoulders than I had. And I think it does really affect them because I had one child in particular and she had a very, very troubled background. At the start of the year she was doing really well and it was obvious that come Christmas it was just too much for her. Whatever she was managing to hide and do herself, because she wasn't getting the support at home, it just fell away and she was like a completely different [i.e. disimproved] student after Christmas [Geraldine, Interview 3].

While the literature on teacher uncertainty suggests that it is a significant and inherent feature of teaching, there are fundamental differences in the ways that teachers describe, interpret and respond to their uncertainties (Helsing 2007). Some studies describe uncertainty as a prime cause of teacher anxiety and deficient practice (e.g. Lortie 1975; Schmidt and Datnow 2005). Others claim that the recognition of uncertainty is an important ingredient to improved practice (e.g. Floden and Buchmann 1993; Wilson and Ball 1996). Recognition of uncertainties can, therefore, be viewed alternatively as a liability or an asset. Yet each stance, Helsing (2007) suggests, is perhaps oversimplified. If we are to understand more fully the ways that teachers experience uncertainties in their work, we may find these experiences to be quite complex, and laden with potential for both positive and negative results. A more generative approach would be to place these divergent models of uncertainty in conversation with each other, thus advancing thinking on the matter of teacher uncertainty. The validity of each stance, and the tension between them, enables a

more nuanced and complex appreciation of uncertainty as a multifaceted concept. Thus, consistent with Helsing's (2007) view, it becomes possible to appreciate that the uncertainties experienced by those participating in my study, had, simultaneously, both positive and negative potential in relation to the shaping of their beginning identities as teachers. For example, tolerance of unsatisfactory practice, on the parts of Oisín and Niall, outlined earlier, may be due to negative uncertainties dissipating the desire, a function of positive uncertainties, necessary to amend unsatisfactory practice.

Overarchingly, beginners' experience of the components of classroom practice, or the teaching design cycle, is characterised by unpredictability and variance. Always complicated, beginning practice is far richer and more sophisticated than commonly assumed. Yet, parallel with evidence of increased confidence, ambitious pedagogy and sophisticated thinking, among those beginners participating in my study, ample evidence also exists of naivety, uncertainty, self-doubt, and trial and error thinking.

6.1.3 Beginners' subjective experience of the passage of time

The domain of experience complexifying the working lives of beginning teachers, explored in this subsection, concerns beginners' subjective sense of the passage of time throughout the induction year. Why is it appropriate, even important, to undertake this task? When conceiving of beginning teacher experience, Corbin et al. (2010, p. 93) distinguish between the twin concepts of induction and initiation. Logical, progressive and possessing a continuous sense of time, induction describes how initiatives such as initial teacher education programmes and probationary processes are configured and implemented. On the other hand, initiation describes the

discontinuous, emotionally-laden performative world of 'real' practice. The subjective disordering of time and memory, Corbin et al. (2010) state, is symbolic "of a deeper existential confrontation, as the ordered limits of induction are contested by the disordering excesses of initiation" (p. 95). Thus, both vivid and forgettable, the 'time' of becoming a teacher seems to be contradictory and strange. Though the facilitation of reconstructed anticipation is a beneficial reflective practice (Conway 2001), in my study, as with beginners studied by Corbin et al. (2010, pp. 92-93), at the end of the beginning year, past selves are uncertainly recalled:

> It was a tough year. So I probably didn't think it was going to be as difficult [Ruth, Interview 3].

> I have gotten to the point now at the end of the year where I am kind of going, well what did I expect it to be? I have kind of forgotten what I went in with [Danielle, Interview 3].

Because they cannot yet invoke the cyclical nature of a 'teacherly year' as a stabilising influence, beginning teachers experience the passage of time in many different and paradoxical ways. Beginning teachers report stages of the induction year as passing unevenly; sometimes hurtling by, at other times lingering (e.g. Corbin et al. 2010; Dodds 2010). With respect to time hurtling by, participants in my study described the passage of time as *hectic* [Danielle, e-mail, October 2010]; *disorientating* [Liam, e-mail, December 2010]; *a bit of a blurr* [Ruth, e-mail, January 2011]; *very fast* [Ruth, Interview 2]; *so quick……you are sort of chasing your tail* [Liam, Interview 2].

Because time hurtled by, it was conceived of as a precious commodity. As a result, dissipating time or 'lost time' was a source of frustration to beginners. Frustration arose when class time was 'lost' to make way for such activities as *school assembly, meetings with the principal and psychologists, organising events for Halloween*

[Fiona, e-mail, October 2010], and *impromptu rehearsals for Christmas related performances* [Liam, e-mail, November 2010]. As a result, Liam quickly appreciates that *planned lessons are simply that; planned.* Therefore, worries at not fulfilling weekly plans dissipate with the realisation that *other issues relating to the agenda of the entire school take precedence over any one class* [Liam, e-mail, November 2010]. Though extremely frustrated, Olivia also has a resigned appreciation of this reality, as inclement weather wreaks a toll on her best laid plans:

> I am in the only prefab classroom in the school which is quite a challenge during both hot and cold weather. Unfortunately during the extremely cold weather, the emergency exit door expanded and won't shut. Consequently, we have been in one of the junior infant classrooms since last Tuesday. This has meant that the two junior infant teachers are both teaching together in one classroom. Nothing is being done about the door. It needs to be replaced and though I have asked on several occasions, I have not received a straight answer. It is difficult not having access to all my resources but I just have to put up with it for now [Olivia, e-mail, December 2010].

Temporally, the disjunctions and shifts of the beginning year are many and various, even involving the uncontrolled expansion of the beginning teacher self into forms of over-investment. The dominating influence of the probationary process ensures that the most common form of over-investment among beginners centres on the ongoing preparation for an inspection visit from a member of the DES Inspectorate. Consistent with the experiences of beginners elsewhere - e.g. Pillen et al. 2013a, 2013b, 2013c - lack of time, resulting from this form of over-investment, impacts significantly on the work/life balance of the beginner, proving to be a considerable source of tension. Geraldine's probationary-related burden is representative:

> There have been a lot of aspects that have gotten me down, the workload. Well everyone is telling me that that is just this year, it will lighten…….The amount of planning, I think I am spending so much

> time writing things down what I am going to do that sometimes I wonder am I so tired when it comes to doing the lesson, am I giving it everything I could be giving it [Geraldine, Interview 1].

With respect to the influence of key episodes on the shaping of identity, the final probationary visit paid by a member of the inspectorate, represents a sharp disjuncture in the manner in which the beginning year of teaching unfolds. After the inspector has departed, following the second and final probationary visit, the summative nature of the evaluative process ensures that the newly-probated beginners are beset by a form of post-performance or post-event blues! Beginners, who hitherto had experienced time as hurtling by, begin to experience the temporal opposite; *off the hook*, time is perceived to linger and drag. In this respect, three fragments, selected from three different end-of-year interviews, depict a similar set of scenarios:

> I mean the last few weeks have dragged in comparison to before the inspector in that the days were more hectic, I was teaching more, I had more stuff planned. Whereas when you don't have things planned, you are just giving them bits and pieces to do that are just coming into the top of your head and the day drags a bit. So I think even for my own sake, so that my days go quicker, you are better off having things planned [Niall, Interview 3].

> I have gotten a lot lazier in the last few weeks but just because your man [Inspector!] is gone and I am just so aware that everything is finished, except for a bit of paperwork. I know the other two girls [beginning colleagues] have still a big cloud hanging over them but it is done for me….. They are panicking at this stage, the two of them, and I am completely off the hook [Oisín, Interview 3].

> Well the first week after I had my probation finished I went into the classroom with a bit less planning and I found it, obviously the less you have planned and ready, the more free time you give to the kids, it actually becomes more of a burden [Liam, Interview 3].

The sentiments expressed in these three fragments are not alone representative of the participating cohort but, I would contend, are representative of the generality of probationers in Irish primary schools. While utilised here to illustrate how beginners subjectively experience the passage of time, these fragments also illustrate that the manner in which the probation of newly-qualified primary teachers was traditionally transacted is no longer fit for purpose. For this reason, the piloting of the, primarily formative, *Droichead* initiative (Teaching Council 2013) is crucially important, not alone for beginning teachers but for all stakeholders in the Irish primary school system.

In this section, the first of two 'twisting paths' journeyed by beginners as they learn to teach, that is, beginners' evolving sense of the complexity of teaching, was sketched. In doing so, an analytic distinction was made between three separable rather than separate aspects of that evolving sense of complexity: beginners' experience of the organisational functioning of their school, beginners' experience of the unpredictability of the teaching design cycle, and beginners' subjective experience of the passage of time. In offering insights into the nature of beginning experience and the manner in which beginning identities are shaped, all three aspects of beginners' evolving sense of the complexity of teaching, have implications for the realms of research, policy making, and beginning teacher preparation and induction practices.

6.2 Developmental nature of significant beginning experiences

In this section, with temporo-spatial connotations in mind, the second of two 'twisting paths' journeyed by beginners as they learn to teach is traced. Doing so helps to glean a sense of how beginning teachers wrestle with the complexities of practice.

Temporally, an individual's series of significant stories constitutes a trajectory through time of becoming a certain kind of person (Sfard and Prusak 2005). Spatially, the personal construction of one's stories constitutes the process of situating oneself within a particular social (Akkerman and Meijer 2011) or figured world (Holland et al. 1998). With respect to the focus of the present enquiry, key influences on the shaping of identity are significant experiences or key episodes, encountered in the boundary or liminal space of the beginning year of teaching.

By facilitating participants to engage in retrospective reflection (Conway 2001), the present study investigates how beginners understand their development, particularly in relation to key beginning experiences. Therefore, during the course of the third individual interview session, in June 2011, each research participant was requested to write short accounts about significant events - i.e. high points, low points, turning points (Conway 2001) - that had occurred throughout the course of their initial year in the workplace (Appendix 7 – see also Appendix 4 and Appendix 6). This approach is informed by the work of Moir (1999 cited in Meijer et al. 2011), which establishes that teachers' development is not a process of steady growth, and of Romano (2006), who describes teachers' reflections on problematic episodes or "bumpy moments" as vital for developing a language of practice. Table 6A contains a summary of participants' retrospective reflections.

Table 6A Participants' Retrospective reflections: High Point; Low Point; Turning Point.

Name	High Point	Low Point	Turning Point
Ruth	First probationary inspection. Went well. Inspector positive. Children well behaved.	Particularly negative meeting with parent.	Returning to a particular topic with pupils. Noticing progression in learning.
Danielle	Successful interview for first teaching job.	Interpreting standardised test results as reflective of own teaching ability.	Settling into the rhythm of a teaching life: the good, the bad and the interesting aspects.
Olivia	Successfully navigating probationary process.	Not being appointed to a permanent teaching position.	Receiving positive feedback from inspector during first probationary inspection.
Geraldine	Receiving positive feedback and reassurance from inspector during second probationary inspection.	A period of being unsure of myself – a feeling of being 'watched' as I awaited first inspection.	Feeling confident as a result of receiving positive feedback from teachers and parents.
Niall	Conclusion of school year - could use knowledge of children's interests to foster atmosphere of fun in the classroom.	Being obliged to involve the parents of a particular child to resolve misbehaviour issues.	Parent/teacher meetings: Parents positive and encouraging.
Fiona	Positive feedback from inspector and principal after probationary inspections.	Being instructed by school principal to adopt a harsh attitude towards maintaining discipline.	Realisation that being a teacher in own right was different to teaching practice.
Liam	Third term: Pupils exhibiting evidence of having progressed since beginning of school year.	February/March: Loss of momentum due to pursuit of extra-curricular activities. Pupils distracted.	Post-Easter: Recognised I had become a positive influence on my class. More confident and assured.
Bernadette	Drama performances with class. First Communion. Recognition of own abilities as an organiser.	Parental complaint – miscommunication.	Public performances: Christmas drama. First Communion Ceremony. Self-esteem enhancing.
Oisín	Success of First Communion Ceremony. Public success. Was viewed as being very capable.	Pupil dissatisfaction with how I taught particularly unsuccessful lessons.	March: First probationary inspection: Positive experience. Gained confidence as a result.

As noted earlier, facilitation of a reconstructed anticipation exercise (Conway 2001) among participants, at the conclusion of their initial year of practice, as with beginners studied by Corbin et al. (2010, pp. 92-93), resulted in past selves being uncertainly recalled. Contrastingly, remembered as flashpoints in time, the key episodes - i.e. high points, low points and turning points - nominated by participants as part of a retrospective reflection exercise, and outlined in Table 6.1, are compellingly vivid and revealing. Particularly revealing is the patterned nature of the nominated episodes. The most obvious pattern across all three categories, and reflective of the affective nature of teaching, is the prominence of performative occasions; probationary-related inspection visits, job interviews, First Communion ceremonies, drama performances, parent-teacher meetings. Within each category, patterns are also apparent. The performativity which characterises the probationary process and, more publicly, First Communion ceremonies, supplied the majority of 'high points'. A majority of 'low points' involved either pupils or their parents, usually, though not surprisingly, perceived by participants to be acting in judgement of their beginning efforts, or engaged with beginners in some form of adversarial transaction. By contrast, the most discernable pattern among the nominated 'turning points' is that of acknowledgement i.e. the receipt of positive feedback by beginners from other stakeholders; inspectors, parents, colleagues.

A final observation on the patterned nature of participants' retrospective reflections relates to an issue previously addressed in this chapter; as well as becoming classroom teachers, beginners become members of an organisational entity (Schempp et al. 1993; Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Curry et al. 2008). With implications for the preparation and induction of teachers, a majority of nominated key episodes relate to

the school as an organisational entity: public performances, probationary processes, the reactions of various stakeholders, interview processes. Far fewer episodes are based on purely classroom based activities involving only the beginning teachers and their allotted pupils.

For a beginning teacher, reflection or forms of self-study play a key role in coming to understand one's own professional self-understanding, in short, one's sense of identity (Kelchtermans 2008; Beauchamp and Thomas 2009). As mentioned, by facilitating engagement in retrospective reflection (Conway 2001), beginning teachers are aided in this way to understand their developing identities. Significantly, though, beginning teachers must be developmentally ready to adopt a critical perspective on practice (Rodgers and Scott 2008). Ensuring that beginners possess the developmental capacity to undertake reflective tasks is the responsibility, in the first instance, of initial teacher education programmes and, subsequently, those school communities among whom newly-graduated teachers begin their teaching careers. That is, beginning teachers use the reflective stance they develop during their initial teacher education programme to make sense of their teaching situation (Grossman et al. 1999). Consistent with this view, Devos et al. (2012) state that support for reflective thinking is a central component of mentoring practice. A warm human relationship between the mentor and the mentee, though important, is not sufficient. Commonly, mentors think of being supportive as their central responsibility, and support is generally understood as being positive and upbeat, yet what beginning teachers often want and need is focused and critical feedback (Bullough et al. 2004, p. 390). Therefore, to facilitate beginners to cross the developmental bridge between initial teacher education and workplace more easily, not least in respect of properly

embedding reflective thinking as a core principle of beginning practice, high levels of contact should exist between initial teacher education providers, induction programmes, and schools.

6.3 Conclusion

To better understand beginning teachers' work lives and the shaping of their identities, as well as to prepare future teachers for the profession of teaching, we need conceptual tools and frameworks to capture and disentangle the multilayered, intertwined realities of classrooms, schools, and educational systems (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a, pp. 118-119; Kelchtermans 2013, p. 1). In response, with research, policy making, and beginning teacher preparation and induction agendas in mind, Chapter 6, by adopting a dynamic perspective on the shaping of beginning teachers' identities, and by incorporating both the temporal and spatial implications of that perspective, through sketching two interrelated and overlapping 'twisting paths' journeyed by beginners as they learn to teach, attempts to disentangle that multilayered, intertwined reality of beginning to teach in the Irish primary school system. Arising from this undertaking, four claims arise from my study

Firstly, key influences on the shaping of identity are significant experiences or key episodes - high points, low points, turning points - encountered in the boundary or liminal space of the beginning year of teaching. An analysis of participants' end-of-year retrospective reflections reveals the patterned nature of nominated episodes. The most obvious pattern across all three categories, and reflective of the affective nature of teaching, is the prominence of performative occasions. Within each category, further patterns are discernable. Overarchingly, among participants, a majority of the

significant experiences or key episodes from the beginning year of practice relate to the school as an organisational entity. Fewer nominated episodes relate to classroom-based activities.

Secondly, indicative of the multi-dimensional nature of a teaching job, the challenge for beginners not only concerns the transition into and management of the classroom environment but also the negotiation of the micropolitical complexity of a school's organisational landscape. A central feature of that negotiation centres on learning how to cope with the fragmentations and frustrations of organisational life. Yet far from being subsumed by these multiple demands, beginners' agentic capabilities ensured that, while frustrated by levels of disruption, they determinedly succeeded in negotiating the structural challenges of the workplace.

Thirdly, while coping with the organisational functioning of their schools, beginners had to simultaneously grapple with the core components of classroom practice or the teaching design cycle i.e. planning, enacting, and assessing. Always complicated, beginning participants manifested both sophisticated and disjointed qualities in varying degrees. Parallel with evidence of increased confidence, ambitious pedagogy and sophisticated thinking; ample evidence also exists of naivety, uncertainty and trial and error thinking. Participants in my study do not describe their momentum in terms of the entirely linear, but reflect instead on a process that is suggestive of rehearsals, or of trial and error, equating to the kinds of thinking through which beginning teachers 'experiment' themselves into being and becoming. Therefore, the shaping of identity is an unpredictable process, characterised by breakdowns and breakthroughs. Yet, for all their dissatisfaction with aspects of their own practice, beginners in my

study also manifest a tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty, displaying an ability to proceed without necessarily knowing.

Fourthly, the disjunctions and shifts of the beginning year were many and various, even involving the uncontrolled expansion of the beginning teacher self into forms of over-investment. Beginning teachers experienced the passage of time in many different and paradoxical ways. Participants reported stages of the induction year as passing unevenly; sometimes hurtling by, at other times lingering**.** When time hurtled by, it was conceived of as a precious commodity. As a result, dissipating time, especially time 'lost' to the organisational aspects of school life, was a source of considerable frustration throughout the beginning year of teaching. In my study, the most common form of over-investment of self among beginners related to ongoing preparations in advance of probationary-related inspection visits from members of the DES Inspectorate. Overall probationary-related processes impacted significantly on the work/life balance of the beginner, proving to be a considerable source of tension. Following the final inspection visit, the summative nature of the primarily evaluative, performative probationary process, ensured that many newly-probated beginners were beset by a form of post-performance inertia.

The present chapter, Chapter 6, represents the third and final chapter devoted to the analysis of data obtained during the fieldwork stage of my study. Among other issues, the following, concluding chapter concentrates on the presentation of claims arising from my study and on implications arising from those claims.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

July 1st 1977 marked my first day as a beginning primary teacher. As was customary at that time, having opened for a half day on July 1st, all primary schools then decamped for the summer holidays. Beginning teachers, fortunate enough to have secured employment, were guaranteed their salary for the holiday period - all for a few hours work! Having completed the half day at my new school, I hitched the sixty miles from the school to my own home; yes, a common practice on Irish roads at that time. I can still vividly recall the late afternoon of that day. As I stood by the roadside near Macroom, Co. Cork, awaiting the next kind-hearted motorist to shorten my journey, my thoughts were very much anchored in my impressions of the 2nd class I had been allocated for the forthcoming school year. Containing a total of forty five boys - yes; a common feature in Irish primary school classrooms at that time - all seemed well but for the presence of one boy whose behaviour had been extremely challenging. Though undiagnosed at that stage, some years later the child was assessed by a psychiatrist as being extremely emotionally disturbed. As no member of the school staff wanted to be allocated the class containing this child, the principal was obliged to allocate said class to the beginning teacher. Hence my state of anxiety on that West Cork roadside some thirty six years ago. I particularly remember being of the opinion that the situation was mine alone to solve. While the atmosphere at my new school had been very welcoming and congenial, I possessed little sense of my new colleagues sharing in my predicament. Though I subsequently managed to prevail throughout the course of that challenging beginning year, my own early experiences and my witnessing the early experiences of many teaching colleagues, during my subsequent twenty six year career as a primary teacher, has led to an

abiding interest in the lot of the beginning teacher and, ultimately, to my choice of topic for doctoral study.

Having rendered a detailed accounted of all stages of that doctoral journey in previous chapters, the purpose of this final chapter is to offer a summation of my study. Accordingly, this chapter adheres to the following layout. Firstly, having outlined the theoretical stance adopted in my study, key empirically-based claims are synthesised with conceptual underpinnings, or 'big ideas', derived from the literature pertaining to the shaping of beginning teacher identity. Secondly, with research, policy making and teacher education practices in mind, a range of implications, arising from these claims, are detailed. Thirdly, theoretical and methodological contributions, deriving from my research, are outlined. Fourthly, the rationales for pursuing particular research directions in the future are explained. The concluding section of the chapter contains a number of succinctly expressed, reflexive 'final words'.

7.1 Theoretical stance

While remaining alert to the possibility of theoretical bias (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 238), my utilisation of a number of theoretical constructs, emanating from the broad-based cultural-historical firmament, prove illuminative and enriching as conceptual bindings. With each privileging a situative perspective on identity shaping, cumulatively, these constructs help make visible and understandable how beginning teachers shape their identities in practice. From the outset, principles derived from sociocultural theories (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998; Putnam and Borko 2000; Rogoff 2003, 2008; Hodkinson et al. 2008) and activity theory (Engeström 1987, 1999, 2001) informed the conceptual framing of my research undertaking. For

instance, a detailed examination of the three, individual semi-structured interview schedules (Appendix 2; Appendix 3; Appendix 4), reveals that principles derived from sociocultural theories and activity theory, determine their layout and content. As my study progressed, however, the influence of additional theoretical perspectives assumed increasing prominence, namely, figured worlds theory (Holland et al. 1998) and dialogical self theory (Hermans 1996, 2012; Akkerman and Meijer 2011). At the analysis stage, particularly, these additional perspectives enhanced the theoretical reading of interview data and of data derived from other instruments i.e. solicited digital diaries (Appendix 5) and the story-line method (Appendix 6; Appendix 7; Appendix 8). By helping elucidate the underemphasised consideration of overlapping contextual factors, to varying degrees both static and ever changing, within the broader framework of teacher identity studies, and by examining how beginning teachers are enculturated into the teaching profession by emphasising critical analysis rather than assimilation, these constructs help theorise the induction or bridging phase of the teacher education continuum.

Drawing upon these theoretical constructs, and by adhering to the ontological and epistemological principles of the constructivist research paradigm (Mertens 2010), my approach, much like that of Zembylas (2003b), views the shaping of an identity "as a form of working *subjectivity*……..a polysemic product of experience" (p. 107). Therefore, as with Zembylas (2003b), my focus is on exploring "the messy meanings of teacher identity as it comes to be constituted through social interactions, performances, and daily negotiations within school culture……. " (p. 109).

However, unlike the more postmodernist stance adopted by Zembylas (2003b), which stresses the multiple, discontinuous and social nature of identity, my study, by taking cognisance of the principles of dialogical self theory (Hermans 1996, 2012; Akkerman and Meijer 2011), furnishes a theoretical viewpoint that assumes the multiple, discontinuous and social nature of identity, while simultaneously explaining identity as being unitary, continuous and individual, instanced by my attention to the influence on beginners of inherited 'cultural scripts' of the 'good teacher' and national pedagogic traditions. Thus, acting as a "bridging theory" in my study (Hermans 2012, p. 9; Akkerman and Meijer 2011, p. 309), dialogical views combine a postmodern and a modern stance that more fully captures the concept of identity in the context of teaching. Its unifying effect renders a dialogical conceptualisation of identity "more complete" as an analytical approach in studying the development of beginning teachers.

7.2 Key empirically-based claims emerging from study

Arising from a detailed scrutiny of Chapters 4, 5 and 6, involving the 'folding over' or consolidation of themes into broader categories describing the shaping of identity, the key claims presented in this chapter comprehensively reflect the empirical data collected in the field. The framework chosen to present these empirically-based claims is influenced by two heavily-consulted sources: Holland et al's. (1998) generalised conceptualisation of the shaping of identity, and Akkerman and Meijer's (2011) dialogical conceptualisation of teacher identity. Accordingly, claims are presented under three headings; namely, figurative identities: a dialogical balancing of the forged and the foisted; spaces of authoring: out-of-class and in-class dimensions of practice; and, positional identities: negotiating the vicissitudes of school culture.

Additionally, claims relating to the emotionality, characteristic of beginning practice, are presented.

7.2.1 Figurative identities: A dialogical balancing of the forged and the foisted

Overarchingly, my study points to the multiplicity of individual beginning teacher lives; lives composed around multiple plotlines (Clandinin et al. 2009). From the outset, among participants, decision-making in relation to choosing primary teaching as a career was characterised by a significant degree of variability. Thus, complexifying Sugrue's (1997, p. 216) more linear representation of the socially constructed nature of a teaching identity, for most participants, choosing to teach, even in cases of initial resistance, either on their own parts or on the parts of significant others, owed much to adherence to deeply-entrenched family and community-related values and traditions (Bourdieu 1984 cited in Hodkinson and Hodkinson 2004b; Holland et al. 1998; Holland and Lave 2009). For others, however, especially those from underrepresented, 'non traditional' teaching backgrounds, the decision to teach owed as much to happenstance as to circumstance.

Consistent with the finding that beginners' perceptions of 'good teaching' rely on an inherited cultural script which stresses the innate, immutable capabilities of the individual teacher, to the diminution of the situative or relational dimensions of practice (Conway et al. 2012), my study uncovers ample evidence that the influence of early teacher role models, both positive and negative, help shape the nascent teaching identities of research participants. Readily evident in my study, and reinforcing the assertion that what beginners learn about teacher role models during the "apprenticeship of observation" is intuitive and imitative rather than explicit and

analytical (Lortie 1975, p. 62), is a focus among beginners on the desirable personal traits of positive early teacher role models. Thus, perceptions of the 'good teacher' as empathetic "facilitator" feature more commonly than do either "executive" or "liberationist" conceptualisations (Fenstermacher and Soltis 2009).

Negative role models are also a significant shaping influence on beginners. Principally, negative school memories cause beginners in my study to resist emulating particular practices in their own teaching, lending credence to the proposal that when individuals learn about figured worlds and come, in some sense, to identify themselves in those worlds, their participation may include reactions to the treatment they themselves received as occupants of positions figured by those worlds (Holland et al. 1998, p. 143). Therefore, although identity is often defined in terms of how one is seen by others, the act of seeing others as certain kinds of people is itself an enactment of a way of being in the world.

Additionally, in what amounts to a reflexive positioning in a figured world or community of practice, at the same time that available models of identity, both positive and negative, influence developing identities, developing identities shape individuals' understandings of different models of identity (Ma and Singer-Gabella 2011, p. 20). This dialogue is not necessarily always harmonious; hence the negotiated nature of identity shaping. In my study, tensions arising from such dialogical realignments or accommodations of identity (Akkerman and Meijer 2011), characterised the early-career experiences of participants. For instance, the influence of longstanding pedagogic traditions exerts a noticeable shaping influence on the figurative identities of study participants and helps fossilise aspects of practice.

However, though undoubtedly a pronounced feature of beginning practice, the adoption of conservative pedagogical approaches among participants in my study is more complex than the linearly imitative process highlighted by Lortie (1975). Indicative, therefore, of the multiple and dynamic nature of identity (Holland et al. 1998; Rodgers and Scott 2008), the experience of participants in my study is one not only of an imposed or "designated" identity (Sfard and Prusak 2005, p. 14), arising from societal or cultural conceptions of teachers, but also one characterised by an agency necessary for the active construction of an identity, thus allowing for the forging of identity in the smithy of the soul (Arata 2001, p. 541), instanced by the range of beginner response to the NIPT-organised workshop series.

7.2.2 Spaces of authoring: Out-of-class and in-class dimensions of practice

Key influences on the shaping of identity are significant experiences or key episodes - high points, low points, turning points - encountered in the boundary or liminal space of the beginning year of teaching. An analysis of participants' end-of-year retrospective reflections reveals the patterned nature of nominated episodes.

The most obvious pattern across all three categories, and reflective of the affective nature of teaching, is the prominence of performative occasions i.e. probationary-related inspection visits, job interviews, First Communion ceremonies, drama performances, parent-teacher meetings. Within each category, further patterns are discernable. The performativity which characterises the probationary process and, more publicly, First Communion ceremonies, supplied the majority of 'high points'. Unsurprisingly, a majority of 'low points' involved pupils or their parents acting in judgement of beginners' efforts or engaged with beginners in some form of adversarial encounter. By contrast, the most discernable pattern among nominated

'turning points' relates to the receipt of affirmation, acknowledgement or positive feedback from other stakeholders i.e. inspectors, parents, colleagues.

Overarchingly, among participants, a majority of the significant experiences or key episodes from the beginning year of practice relate to the school as an organisational entity. Fewer nominated episodes relate to classroom-based activities, involving the beginning teachers and their allotted pupils. Indicative, therefore, of the multi-dimensional nature of a teaching job, the challenge for beginners not only concerns the transition into and management of the classroom environment but also the negotiation of the micropolitical complexity of a school's organisational landscape (Schempp et al. 1993; Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Curry et al. 2008). Beginners soon realise that a central feature of that negotiation centres on learning how to cope with the fragmentations and frustrations of organisational life. Yet, far from being subsumed by these multiple demands, beginners' agentic capabilities ensured that, while frustrated by levels of disruption, they determinedly succeeded in negotiating the structural challenges of the workplace. Even when it meant acknowledgement of their relative inexperience or inability to effect desired changes, beginning participants displayed considerable evidence of the micropolitical nous and agentic capacity necessary for the skilful negotiation of issues in the workplace.

While coping with the organisational functioning of their schools, beginners had to simultaneously grapple with the core components of classroom practice or the teaching design cycle i.e. planning, enacting, and assessing. Always complicated, beginning participants manifested both sophisticated and disjointed qualities in varying degrees. Therefore, throughout their beginning year, many of the participants

in my study moved towards a position of increasing sophistication. In doing so, participants came to recognise teaching as a complex and difficult activity that, despite the challenges involved, they could practice skilfully. For instance, shifts towards more sophisticated understandings of practice included a developing awareness among beginners of the desirability of enhanced use of the curricular principles of linkage and integration.

Parallel with evidence of increased confidence, ambitious pedagogy and sophisticated thinking; ample evidence also exists of naivety, uncertainty and trial and error thinking. Fraught with uncertainty, unevenness, and characterised by periods of self-doubt and questioning, meaningful learning frequently proved a slow and uncertain process. For all their feelings of increased confidence and of having taken steps forwards, as with beginners studied by Dodds (2010, p. 161), participants in my study do not describe their momentum in terms of the entirely linear, but reflect instead on a process that is suggestive of rehearsals, or of trial and error, equating to the kinds of thinking through which beginning teachers 'experiment' themselves into being and becoming. Even when beginning teachers assess their developmental trajectory as unproblematic and ever upward, overestimation, born of naivety, frequently lay at the heart of their assessment of progress. Frequently 'out of joint' (Britzman 2007, p. 1) and far from being a narrative of triumphs, the shaping of identity, on the parts of those beginners participating in my study, was an unpredictable process, characterised by breakdowns and breakthroughs.

A principal source of uncertainty, particularly among the more fastidious participants, derived from a dawning realisation that educating children is a complex process that

is only partly determined by intentional educational interventions (Kelchtermans 2011, p. 72); despite effort and good intentions, successful learning outcomes remain uncertain. The realisation that limitations apply to one's competence or efficacy was accompanied by feelings of vulnerability and a questioning of the professional self (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a, p. 111; Bullough et al. 2004, p. 380; Orland-Barak and Maskit 2011, p. 439; Pillen et al. 2013a, 2013b, 2013c). Yet, for all their dissatisfaction with aspects of their own practice, beginners in my study also manifest a tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty, an ability to proceed without necessarily knowing.

Temporally, the disjunctions and shifts of the beginning year were many and various, even involving the uncontrolled expansion of the beginning teacher self into forms of over-investment. Because they could not yet invoke the cyclical nature of a 'teacherly year' as a stabilising influence, beginning teachers experienced the passage of time in many different and paradoxical ways. Participants reported stages of the induction year as passing unevenly; sometimes hurtling by, at other times lingering**.** When time hurtled by, it was conceived of as a precious commodity. As a result, dissipating time, especially time 'lost' to the organisational aspects of school life, was a source of considerable frustration throughout the beginning year of teaching.

In my study, the most common form of over-investment of self among beginners related to ongoing preparations in advance of probationary-related inspection visits from members of the DES Inspectorate. Consistent with the experiences of beginners elsewhere - e.g. Corbin et al. 2010; Pillen et al. 2013a, 2013b, 2013c - lack of time, arising from an over-investment of self, impacts significantly on the work/life balance

of the beginner, proving to be a considerable source of tension. As a consequence, in my study, the occasion of the final probationary inspection represented a sharp disjuncture in the unfolding of the beginning year of teaching. Following the final inspection visit, the summative nature of the primarily evaluative, performative probationary process, ensured that many newly-probated beginners were beset by a form of post-performance inertia.

7.2.3 Positional Identities: Negotiating the vicissitudes of school culture

A function of the capacity to exercise power and influence in the day-to-day, on-the-ground interactions with others, positional identities refer to views held of oneself vis-à-vis others in a given situation (Holland et al. 1998). As a result, comprehensive accounts of identity shaping must incorporate the positional significance of power differentials and the micro-political nature of the workplace (Hodkinson et al. 2008, p. 32). Of particular importance in the figured world of beginning teaching, is the manner in which power is operationalised in the workplace between a beginning teacher and others whose positions are defined relationally vis-à-vis the beginner.

In a manner all too common in veteran-oriented professional cultures (Kardos and Johnson 2007), beginners, it is assumed, are capable of fending for themselves. In my study, as a result of class allocation decisions, for example, beginners found themselves immersed in complex social relations and sophisticated professional roles within established school communities, whilst at the same time scrambling to make sense of their own experiences and understand what it means to be a teacher (Day and Gu 2010, p. 66). However, it would be incorrect to assume that beginners are cowed by challenging situations. In my study, coping with the vicissitudes of veteran-oriented school cultures, obliged beginners to be ever resourceful. In this regard,

unplanned and happened upon incidentally, even haphazardly, 'in-between learning' on the parts of beginning teachers occurred 'through the cracks' in workplace spaces such as staffrooms and playgrounds.

The nature of their interactions with colleagues, furnishes key insights into the positional identities of beginning teachers and of school culture. In this respect, my study uncovered no evidence of working climates that could be described as unhealthy or of colleagues, for all their veteran-oriented dispositions, whose attitude towards beginners could be described as negative or grudging. Positionally, therefore, beginners were not deliberately disadvantaged by senior colleagues. However, motivated to forge their own reputations as teachers, beginners preferred to determine the nature of their engagements with colleagues (Achinstein 2002, 2006; Turkle 2010). Therefore, though occasionally reluctant to seek help, lest they be perceived as less than fully capable of functioning as a teacher, given the generally collegial atmosphere prevalent in all nine school settings, most beginners proactively consulted with colleagues on an informal basis, usually at the level of 'exchange and co-ordination for teaching' rather than at a deeply collaborative level (Gilleece et al. 2009, p. 84). In doing so, anxious to obtain help with aspects of beginning practice, participants exhibited little reluctance to appear as learners in the eyes of their colleagues.

Nonetheless, while ostensibly collegial, my study uncovered a nuanced reality. When scrutinised closely, isolated, individualistic practices were frequently the norm, instanced by the manner in which the joint responsibility of class teachers and special education teachers for the support of pupils with special educational needs, was

transacted. When contact between both parties was initiated, it was frequently motivated by the professional self-interest of teachers, including beginning teachers, rather than by concerns related to pupil progress. Additionally, given the predominantly veteran-oriented professional cultures of schools, where mentoring was provided, a narrow rather than a robustly expansive view of mentoring support prevailed, resulting in less than fulsome commitment on the part of assigned mentors, and, underwhelmed by the process, beginner complicity in how mentoring support was narrowly conceived of and transacted (Norman and Feiman-Nemser 2005), inadvertently reinforcing an individualistic orientation towards teaching and learning to teach (Feiman-Nemser 2001, p. 1049; Feiman-Nemser 2010, p. 24). These claims resonate with wider findings pertaining to the post-primary sector in Ireland (e.g. Gilleece et al. 2009; Mooney Simmie and Moles 2011; Conway et al. 2011a, 2011b; Hall et al. 2012; Long et al. 2012; Conway et al. 2014).

Manifestly 'positional' in that hierarchical and status-related considerations significantly influenced its conceptualisation and transaction, mentoring practices were principally concerned with mediating the intricacies of long-established, primarily evaluative, probationary obligations. Thus, the relatively privileged position of the DES Inspectorate within the figured worlds of primary schooling ensured that the supportive actions of other stakeholders, notably principals and mentors, were mainly concerned with attending to the perceived probationary-related requirements of beginners. Disproportionately influenced by the perceived demands of an externally evaluated, probationary process, frequently, mentoring help was too passively observational on the parts of both beginners and mentors, and insufficiently participative in terms of co-teaching arrangements between both parties.

More generally, the inordinate degree to which reified, probationary-influenced practices, determined the course of the beginning year of teaching, significantly compromised the ongoing shaping of positional identity among those participating in my study. Conceiving of teaching as individual performance, techniques that responded to the immediate, probationary-related needs of beginners were valued over more complex forms of practice. The inspectorial context led beginners to present competent performances of teaching, mainly efficient curriculum delivery, rather than risky attempts at interactively, responsively and adventurously supporting pupil learning. Viewing the probationary process exclusively in evaluative terms, the prospect of having to perform for an inspector, literally at a moments notice, obliterated any inclination to experiment or engage in adventurous pedagogy. Seeking solace in the familiar, among beginners, the tangible and intangible reifications of teaching practice were valued for their potential contribution towards successfully negotiating the snapshot, high stakes nature of probationary occasions. Furthermore, within the confines of efficient curriculum delivery, owing to 'local knowledge', the probationary-related aversion to risk and responsiveness was amplified among beginners by a preoccupation with attending to the 'likes' and avoiding the 'dislikes' of the particular member of the Inspectorate assigned to one's case. Performativity, therefore, short-circuited or constrained the range of learning affordances potentially available to beginners. In the restricted circumstances of a probationary regime, inspection visits became little more than empty rituals; one off probationary occasions, lacking in pedagogical meaningfulness, with little to contribute to contemporary conceptualisations of teacher learning.

7.2.4 Emotionality: Relational dynamics of the beginning year of practice

As with new teachers elsewhere (e.g. Corbin 2010), in my study, teachers' emotions and the relational dynamics that trigger them are highlighted as important in the beginning year of practice. Deepening an understanding, in an Irish context, of beginners' emotional experiences during their initial phase of being a teacher, claims catch sight of some important factors.

By choosing to manifest care for their pupils, beginners were able to shape a sense of identity which cohered with their beliefs about the teaching role. Apart from public, set piece occasions, classroom-based interactions also possessed the potential to enthuse. In addition to the satisfaction of being part of pupils' successes, emotional bonds with pupils seemed most essential when linked to pupil success resulting from the teachers' own commitment and effort. The experiences of beginners participating in my study reveal that, in relation to interacting with pupils, the regulation of emotions or emotional labour are important issues in the first year. Therefore, a tension existed between the joy of working as a caring teacher and the exhaustion it simultaneously caused.

While, generally, participants experienced cultures of care in their respective schools, prevailing individualistic school cultures ensured that collaborative practice was limited and sporadic. While claims confirm that being nurtured as a new teacher by colleagues is common, this study also unearths tensions arising from the individualism, characteristic of veteran-oriented professional cultures, prevalent in primary schools in Ireland. Nurturance principally involves signs of consideration extended by colleagues and principals to beginners. Claims indicate that participants, for the most part, are nurtured in this particular way. There are, however, cases that

point to, while not the opposite, at least an unreasonable assumption on the part of senior colleagues and principals, particularly with respect to class allocation, that beginners can be allocated the most onerous responsibilities in the school from the very outset. Resonating with the experiences of beginners elsewhere, help may be afforded, but not with everything. Yet my study unearths a tension here as beginners, motivated to forge their own reputations as teachers, frequently prefer to determine the degree and nature of their engagements with colleagues

In my study school leadership was found to be particularly influential in determining the emotional nature of beginning to teach. Playing an important role in the shaping of teacher identity, the emotional reactions of beginners, arising from their perception of how they were supported by their respective principals, resonate with the view that the organisational structure of the school guides teachers' emotional conduct and shapes their perception of appropriate expressions (Zembylas 2003a; Price 2012). Thus, among those participating in my study, emotions can be perceived as performances within prevailing power relations and rules.

Interactions among beginning teachers elicited a range of emotions. Collaboration and mutual support between beginners in the same school, typified the general situation. However, frequently, relationships among beginners possessed a competitive edge. Anxiety inducing, competitive individualism, to some degree an overhang from student teaching days, but principally a function of the performativity characteristic of the probationary process, characterised interactions among some beginners.

As the hosting of parent teacher meetings demands deployment of a considerable range of skills on the part of beginners, parental contact was appreciated but described in somewhat guarded terms. The prospect of having to meet parents filled many participants with trepidation. These fears, usually, were unfounded, as in a majority of cases, parent teacher meetings proved to be positive encounters. Yet, due to their relative youth, for some beginners, age difference presented difficulties when meeting parents. As a result, some beginners felt burdened by the personal nature of the information a number of parents divulged to them. Mirroring concerns expressed regarding the potential negative impact on children of critical report writing (Hall et al. 2008), participants perceived report writing in general, and delivering standardised test results in particular, as stressful. Also presenting as a source of stress was how disimproved standardised test scores reflect on the reputation of the beginning teacher. Frequently, emotive exchanges with parents centred on the issue of homework, long a distinctive feature of primary schooling in Ireland.

Resonating with Bahia et al. (2013) it seems that while interacting with pupils at the level of the classroom trigger emotions related to an ethic of care, whereas when obliged to engage at a more systemic level, beginners activate emotions related to the profession of teaching. This distinction suggests, albeit tentatively, the possibility of different emotional identities related to teaching that result in different concerns and intensities of emotions and feelings. As with beginners elsewhere (e.g. Aspfors and Bondas 2013), for those participating in my study, a principal source of the emotionality characterising their beginning year lay outside the school.

My study uncovered ample evidence that the two, primarily evaluative, probationary-related visits, which all beginners received from a member of the DES Inspectorate, shaped the emotional tone of the beginning year to a significant extent. While awaiting an inspection visit, most participants experienced prolonged periods of low-level stress, with resulting negative effects on the day-to-day transaction of practice. In the aftermath of the first inspection visit, participants enjoyed a boost in self-confidence and a temporary respite from the anxieties of the probationary process. However, during the second half of the school year, as the prospect of the final inspectorial visit drew ever closer, all participants experienced considerable levels of probationary-related stress. As a consequence, beginners constantly drew comparisons between their own rate of progress through the probationary process and that of other beginners known to them. When the probationary process finally concluded, the sense of relief among participants was palpable.

As a result, privileging images of the 'good teacher' (Conway et al. 2012) as someone who primarily acts as 'facilitator' (Fenstermacher and Soltis 2009), classroom situations devoted to pupil well-being and learning are where positive emotions are most experienced, whereas, for instance, issues relating to the probationary process which impact, even interfere, directly in the classroom, trigger emotions of a more negative kind. Ironically, as the intensity of the inspectorial regime wanes, in light of new probationary arrangements outlined in the *Droichead* initiative (Teaching Council 2013), the inexorable rise of new accountabilities (Conway 2013; Conway and Murphy 2013) may trigger sufficient levels of anxiety among beginners to more than adequately fill the void. If such a scenario proves true, images of the 'good teacher' may be obliged to privilege the skill set and attitudes of an 'executive' rather

than a ‘facilitator’ (Fenstermacher and Soltis 2009), with consequent implications for the shaping of beginners’ emotional identities.

7.3 Implications arising from study claims

While acknowledging that the concept of transferability rather than generalisability more appropriately applies to my study, the empirically-based claims arising from my study have implications for all phases of the teacher education continuum i.e. initial teacher education, induction, and continuing professional development (Teaching Council 2011a). In turn, a range of issues relating to these claims foreground the necessity of fostering linkages or coherences across all three phases of the teacher education continuum. These issues include, among others, the composition of the teaching profession; priorities informing the design of initial teacher education programmes; developing school capacities to best facilitate beginning teachers; and, accordance of due recognition to the emotional domain of teaching. In one way or another, each of these issues relate, Janus-like, to all phases of the teacher education continuum; hence the necessity that all stakeholders involved in teacher education, whether concerned with research, policy making or practice, would actively foster coherences across all three phases of the continuum.

7.3.1 Composition of the teaching profession

Though their decision-making in respect of choosing to teach exhibited a degree of variability, particularly in relation to overcoming initial hesitancies, nonetheless the backgrounds of a majority of study participants furnishes evidence of the overrepresentation of particular social groupings in the composition of the primary teaching profession. On the other hand, the almost haphazard manner in which a particular participant from an underrepresented social grouping entered the figured

world of primary teaching indicates that a broadening of the socio-economic, cultural and ethnic composition of the teaching profession needs to be addressed in a deliberately proactive fashion.

Positive discrimination in favour of applicants from Gaeltacht [Irish speaking] regions has long been a feature of recruitment to undergraduate programmes of initial teacher education at primary level. Given that the primary teaching profession is less socially, culturally and ethnically diverse than in other OECD countries (Hyland 2012, p. 10), as is also the case with the teaching profession at post-primary level (Heinz 2013), a similar system of positive discrimination should be extended to teaching applicants from underrepresented sections of society. With obvious implications for policy formulation on the parts of the Teaching Council and the Department of Education and Skills, ultimately, such an initiative would have favourable consequences for the staffing of schools, not least in respect of the provision of positive role models in DEIS schools [areas of socio-economic disadvantage] and the extension of wider staffing options to newly-developing primary schools, particularly schools established under the auspices of patronage bodies such as Educate Together and the newly-formed Education and Training Boards (formerly Vocational Education Committees).

7.3.2 Priorities informing the design of initial teacher education programmes

The adage that 'forewarned is never quite forearmed' (Corbin et al. 2010, p. 94) notwithstanding, the claims which emerged from my study have implications for what should be considered as important priorities informing the design of programmes of initial teacher education. Arising from these study claims, three such priorities for initial teacher education are suggested.

Firstly, programmes of initial teacher education should prioritise the cultivation of an awareness of professional culture among student teachers. In providing an insight into aspects of practice which complexify the working lives of beginning teachers, post graduation, my study highlighted that as well as becoming classroom teachers, beginners also become members of an organisational entity. Therefore, in the interests of disentangling the multilayered, intertwined reality of schools and classrooms, and anticipating the inherent messiness of beginning practice (Feiman-Nemser 2008; Flores 2011), teacher educators should begin the process of helping prospective teachers learn to cope with the 'power' dynamic prevailing in schools. Consequently, with similar implications for subsequent phases of teacher education, the dilemma-laden, micropolitical reality of schools, the "shady corners of teaching" (Orland-Barak and Maskit 2011), deserve explicit attention during the initial teacher education phase. However, despite ample support for developing the micropolitical literacy of student teachers in programmes of initial teacher education (e.g. Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Achinstein 2006; Rodgers and Scott 2008; Flores 2011; Aspfors and Bondas 2013; Gu and Day 2013), the enhancement of teachers' skills to communicate with pupils is prioritised over developing their ability to communicate with fellow adults in the workplace. While from the outset of practice, beginners participating in my study proved themselves politically adept in the workplace, to proactively facilitate student teachers to anticipate the unknown realities of schools as workplaces (McNally et al. 2010, p. 24; Stronach 2010, p. 215), teacher educators should consider facilitating student teachers to engage in forms of anticipatory or prospective reflection (e.g. Conway 2001) or enable students to engage in anticipating their possible selves, post

graduation (e.g. Conway and Clark 2003; Beauchamp and Thomas 2010; Hamman et al. 2010, 2013a, 2013b).

Secondly, the prevalence of conservative practice on the parts of study participants has implications for initial teacher education. As established, the inclination of beginners to act conservatively and individualistically arose from a combination of overlapping causes, among which the most significant was the apprenticeship of observation served during a beginner's own schooling, the prevalence of veteran-oriented school cultures, and the dominance of probationary-related obligations throughout the beginning year of teaching.

Regardless of causation, and, as ever, with implications for all phases of teacher education, to help wean beginners from an inclination towards conservative, individualistic practice and, instead, enhance their capacity to learn from their pedagogic practice and engage in forms of ambitious pedagogy, teacher educators must help student teachers to look beyond the familiar worlds of teaching and learning by transforming commonsense ideas about teaching and personal experiences of schooling (Feiman-Nemser 2001, p.1049; Kane and Francis 2013). Overarchingly, rather than privileging dispensing knowledge-*for*-practice (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1999), teacher educators must aid student teachers to develop the skills of inquiry, thus developing knowledge-*of*-practice (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1999) and foster the habits of critical colleagueship. Doing so develops the capacity of beginners to question and adapt school practices. Therefore, a powerful curriculum for learning to teach has to be orientated around a number of dimensions of practice; the intellectual

and clinical tasks of teaching, and the contexts of teachers' work (Feiman-Nemser 2001; Grossman et al 2009).

Thirdly, programmes of initial teacher education need to prioritise the exploration of issues related to professional identity (Izadinia 2013). Challenging and supporting student teachers to interrogate the figured worlds and cultural archetypes of primary teaching, facilitates the cultivation of their teaching identities and develops a necessary awareness of the political, historical, and social forces that shape them (Spalding et al. 2011; Thomas & Beauchamp 2011). Lest these shaping influences be interpreted deterministically, it is necessary that those involved in initial teacher education adopt an interactionist perspective on teacher learning (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Flores and Day 2006). An interactionist perspective emphasises that new teachers both shape and are shaped by their work contexts. Adoption of an interactionist perspective would help prepare student teachers deal more effectively with issues arising from the figured worlds of teaching, particularly tensions relating to, among others, ascribed identity, visibility, expectation, balancing job commitment and personal distance i.e. generally dealing with the blurred nature of boundaries between the personal and professional realms of beginning experience. Therefore, consistent with Helsing's (2007) view, it becomes possible to appreciate that the uncertainties experienced by those participating in my study, had, simultaneously, both positive and negative potential in relation to the shaping of their beginning identities as teachers.

Insight into professional identity tensions experienced by beginning teachers are important in forming a better understanding of how student teachers should be

prepared during initial teacher education. In this regard, tensions often mentioned by beginning teachers concern conflicts between what they desire and what is possible in reality (Mayer 2011; Pillen et al. 2013a, 2013b, 2013c). The challenge of educating teachers whose ideals or vision can prevail in workplace settings, underscores the importance of focusing in initial teacher education on giving prospective teachers knowledge about student characteristics and teaching skills as well as the social and political conditions that frame and constrain teachers' work. Helping prospective teachers identify and examine their specific purpose and vision within the socio-political context of schools and teachers' work, and helping them realise that they will experience difficult emotions as they begin teaching, and that their visions will be challenged, may help beginning teachers negotiate a less traumatic entry into the profession, thus helping build resilience and enhance the capacity of beginners to act agentically over time. With a view to influencing school improvements through participation in processes of school self-evaluation, the development of these capacities in beginners is particularly relevant at the present time due to the introduction of a system of school self-evaluation and the publication by the Inspectorate of the DES, in Nov 2012, of self-evaluation guidelines governing the process (DES 2012d).

Having outlined the implications arising from my study for initial teacher education, I now outline implications for the development of school capacities to best facilitate beginning teachers, post graduation.

7.3.3 Developing school capacities to best facilitate beginning teachers

Corbin et al. (2010, p. 93) distinguish between the twin concepts of induction and initiation; induction describing how initiatives such as the NIPT-organised workshop series are configured and implemented, and initiation describing the discontinuous, emotionally-laden performative world of 'real' practice. While induction is perceived as incapable of ever fully capturing and addressing the complexities of initiation, nonetheless, a sophisticated understanding of early professional learning, McNally et al. (2010, pp. 15-16) state, conceptualises new teachers' experiences as an uneasy amalgam of these twin concepts. As a result, all activities supportive of beginning teachers can be perceived as attempts at bridging the chasm between induction and initiation. Claims arising from my study suggest that a successful bridging of that chasm presupposes a 'goodness of fit' between the twin processes of induction and initiation. Ensuring that 'goodness of fit' has significant implications for how beginning teachers are supported during their initial year of practice, post- graduation.

With respect to supporting beginning teachers, we need to ask, as Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005) do, what kind of induction and mentoring do we desire and what sorts of outcomes do we seek? With implications for the design and delivery of NIPT-sponsored induction initiatives, as they exist within a set of nested contexts, general policies advocating, even mandating, support for beginning teachers, while helpful, are not sufficient (Carver and Feiman-Nemser 2009, p. 323; Kardos and Johnson 2010, p. 41). Therefore, placing full responsibility for induction in the hands of a mentor ignores the limits of mentoring and the impact of the workplace on the process (Achinstein 2006; Mooney Simmie and Moles 2011, p.477). The impact of mentoring not only depends on appropriate matches, time, and mentor knowledge and skill, but also on the expectations that mentors and beginners hold for one another and

how they actually collaborate together. Mentors who view their work in robustly expansive educational terms have a clear idea of the kind of teaching they want to foster, that is, the promotion of a shared sense of responsibility for meaningful and effective learning on the part of all students, while, simultaneously, viewing both themselves and their mentees as learners (Athanases and Achinstein 2003). Therefore, schools that conceive of the 'workplace' as a 'learningplace' (Conway et al. 2014), involving two-way interactions about teaching and learning among beginners and experienced teachers, constitute those settings where the desired policy outcomes of induction and mentoring are more likely to be achieved (Edwards and Protheroe 2003; Kardos and Johnson 2007). In the context of Irish primary schooling, ensuring that these benefits accrue to beginning teachers has implications for how NIPT-sponsored induction and mentoring initiatives are conceived of and transacted. Two such implications are fundamentally important.

Firstly, a short-term, instrumental focus on eased entry to the workplace, individualistically orientated and privileging beginners' immediate concerns, sidelines the long-term, formative educative purpose of beginning teacher development. Therefore, it is necessary that formal induction programmes are perceived as but one element of a career-long professional learning continuum, contributing to the ongoing study and improvement of teaching (Teaching Council 2011a). Consistent with this view, and with implications for the development of coherences or 'connective tissue' (Feiman-Nemser 2001, p. 1049) between the phases of the continuum, NIPT-sponsored induction and mentoring initiatives must be conceived, not as freestanding, discrete or stand-alone entities, providing generic, short-term 'shepherding' assistance to first-year teachers, but as the beginning stage of a collaboratively orientated,

ongoing, job-embedded professional development continuum for all teachers (Kane and Francis 2013).

Secondly, formal induction programmes, frequently delivered in off-site locations, take insufficient account of the mediating influence of the institutional contexts and professional cultures that surround new teachers. Instead, teachers are helped to fit into schools as they are rather than helped to participate in transforming schools into more effective sites for teacher and pupil learning. However, if induction and mentoring processes are to be directed towards desired ends, the socialising influence of school culture and organisational structures must be acknowledged (Feiman-Nemser 2010; Johnson 2012a, 2012b). After all, the school site is where the key factors that influence new teacher induction converge. As school cultures both enable and constrain induction and mentoring processes, while mindful of the challenges involved in developing collaborative cultures (Achinstein 2002), beginners must be inducted into communities of practice where they can learn with and from reform-minded teachers, well versed in the habits of critical colleagueship (Feiman-Nemser 2001). Adopting an organisational perspective (Johnson 2012a, 2012b), the creation of collegial, facilitative school environments must, therefore, be a core value informing the development of induction and mentoring supports in schools. For this reason, the proposed piloting of the, primarily formative, *Droichead* initiative is particularly gratifying as it demonstrates adherence, on the part of the Teaching Council, to an organisational perspective with respect to how beginning teachers are inducted and probated in the future (Teaching Council 2013).

Conceived, of necessity, in terms of an overall school change effort (Feiman-Nemser 2010, p. 26; Mooney Simmie and Moles 2011, p.479), modifying the mediating influence of professional culture on induction and mentoring processes, demands that school capacity to respond innovatively to beginning teachers be developed as a matter of priority. With particular implications for the continuing professional development phase of the teacher education continuum (Teaching Council 2011a), as school staffs are effectively the gatekeepers of induction and mentoring processes, it is necessary to cultivate a willingness among colleagues to collaborate in the professional development of beginning teachers. Involving a fundamental shift in identity, arising from a necessary deprivatisation of practice, fostering a robust induction culture involves facilitating experienced classroom teachers to view themselves as co-learners as they mentor beginning teachers in their midst. In this respect, the adoption of collegial practices based on, for instance, Japanese Lesson Study, are worthy of exploration (Hamilton 2013, p. 113; Saito and Atencio 2013). Predicated on the principle that at the heart of an excellent teacher lies the heart of an excellent learner (Ó Ruairc 2013a), the long-term inculcation of the vision of the 'learning teacher' necessitates teachers being introduced early in their careers to the skills of inquiry and given many opportunities to develop the habits of critical colleagueship (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2009; Feiman-Nemser 2001, p. 1049). More immediately, though, particularly in light of proposed plans pertaining to the school-based induction and probation of beginning teachers, post-2015 (Teaching Council 2013), and with implications for the roles of the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT), Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO), developing the capacities of mentor teachers and school principals are matters of priority.

As efforts to improve workplace learning tend to impact unevenly across workplaces and individual workers (TLRP 2004), initiatives which would help modify the degree of variability characterising mentoring processes, include enhancing the political literacy of mentors (Achinstein 2006), and facilitating mentors to reflect on their own early socialisation experiences and their attachment to practice-based experience as a source of professional knowledge (Clarke et al. 2013). Particularly desirable is that mentors would possess a well developed vocabulary about mentoring and have a vision of teaching as a blend of sophisticated foundational knowledge and complex instructional moves (Kane and Francis 2013; Richter 2013). Additionally, facilitative leadership on the parts of school principals in the reframing of 'school place' as 'learning place', and acceptance, on their parts, that the induction, probation and general professional development of beginners are part of their remit, are pivotally important in respect of facilitating the transition of beginners into workplaces (Youngs 2007; Birkeland and Feiman-Nemser 2012; Conway et al. 2011b; Gu and Day 2013; Conway et al. 2014). The cultivation of a mentoring culture in schools also benefits from the development of non-hierarchical models of partnership between schools, the National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (Zeichner 2010; Carver 2010; Reynolds et al. 2013), which, in turn, has implications for the role played by the Teaching Council in proactively and coherently facilitating these contacts.

7.3.4 Accordance of due recognition to the emotional domain of teaching

Though qualitative and descriptive, claims arising from my study relating to the emotional or affective domain of beginner experience have implications for all three phases of the teacher education continuum (Teaching Council 2011a).

With respect to the initial teacher education phase of the continuum, the Teaching Council, responsible for setting criteria and guidelines for programme providers (Teaching Council 2011b), and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), responsible for the provision of programmes of initial teacher education, both need to prioritise the preparation of student teachers to deal effectively with the emotional aspects of practice. In turn, working towards this objective has implications for the professional development of teacher educators, as an understanding of their own emotions and the emotions of others is an essential prerequisite to developing student teachers in the field. In this respect, sharing 'vital simultaneities' with their student cohort (Davis 2008 cited in Deegan 2012, p. 180), in addition to demonstrating care for the caregivers by incorporating mentoring and supervision approaches that not only facilitate emotional understanding, but model it, Meyer (2009, pp. 89-90) suggests that informed, skilled practice on the parts of teacher educators necessitates access to, firstly, a literature base that illuminates how emotional practice is realised in a variety of school settings and over the course of teachers' careers, secondly, evidence of effective ways to discuss emotional practice and the power structures of classrooms and schools with student teachers, and, thirdly, familiarity with conceptual frameworks that integrate pedagogy and content knowledge with teacher identity and emotional practices. Acting as a useful counterpart to qualitative research, which describes the range, depth and experience of emotions in institutional and social contexts, one such conceptual framework is that advocated by Corcoran and Tormey

(2012), who suggest focusing on cultivating the skills or competences of emotional intelligence. Among others, these skills pertain to the perception, appraisal, expression, analysis and regulation of emotion. The adoption of an emotional intelligence competences framework of this kind, while not offering a general theory of teacher emotions, and not addressing the social, institutional and cultural dimensions of teacher emotions, does, however, Corcoran and Tormey (2012, p.757) suggest, offer a framework for making sense of what emotional competence student teachers need, for accessing to what extent they have required emotional skills, and for using that information in designing and reforming teacher education programmes.

In Ireland, much like Norway for instance (Jakhelln 2011), weak traditions of dialogue about emotions prevents beginners from using their emotions constructively in their development as teachers. With implications for the continuing professional development of school management and mentoring colleagues (Mooney Simmie and Moles 2011), dedicated efforts at introducing and including beginning teachers need to comprise more than simple social well-being. Therefore, during the induction phase (Teaching Council 2011a), supporting beginners to manage the emotional unpredictability of the school as an organisational setting is as important as support in developing their pedagogical and classroom management skills. It is essential, therefore, that a whole-school approach towards reducing the emotional vulnerability of beginning teachers is adopted (Hargreaves 2000, 2001; Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Day and Gu 2010; Devos et al. 2012; Aspfors and Bondas 2013; Gu and Day 2013).

7.4 Study contributions

In Ireland, the volume of research centring on aspects of initial teacher education has noticeably increased of late. In this regard, though typically based on convenience samples assembled in Higher Educational Institutions, much valuable work has recently been published (e.g. Deegan 2008; Conway et al. 2011a; Waldron et al 2012; Conway et al. 2012; Long et al. 2012; Hall et al. 2012; Murphy et al. 2013; Conway et al. 2014). By comparison, while equally insightful, research into the induction phase of teaching, as Conway et al. (2009) and Aitken and Harford (2011) illustrate, is less extensive (e.g. O'Doherty and Deegan 2009; Killeavy and Moloney 2010; Mooney Simmie and Moles 2011). Thus, in selecting nine participants via the 'snowball' sampling approach, and in unveiling their immediate, post-graduation experiences, I have helped plough a new furrow in the field of educational research in Ireland. Both theoretically and methodologically, while reinforcing continuity with previous work, my figured worlds-inspired study elaborates on the topic of beginning teaching.

Theoretically, with research, policy making and practice agendas in mind, my study helps unveil an area of Irish educational life which, hitherto, has remained largely unexplored. Offering a situated analysis of early-career identity shaping among nine primary school teachers, across multiple sites, over the space of one year, using a triangulated methodology, the multi-temporal methodology captures changing identity processes. Across the analytic chapters there is an emergent sense of how, in many respects, school cultural practices remain unchanging with the passage of time. An insight into the social reproduction of school cultural practices over time emerges; beginning with my own personal history, my beginning experiences of a 'veteran' school culture, and through details of school institutional processes and practices. My

analysis shows beginning teachers engaging with these cultural processes during the first year of practice and how in moments they challenge these cultural practices; in other moments they become fossilising agents. In this way, the historical, cultural and social shaping and reproduction, as observed in the experiences and practices of new teachers, is revealing. Much of the 'fossilising' pressure comes from external, multi-sourced evaluative pressures: the 'cigire'; the First Communion; the pressure to ensure children can spell correctly and be capable of demonstrating that capacity; taking on the social identity of 'the muinteoir'. The institutional pressures conspire to locate success-failure in the individual teacher; the rational defence is to 'fossilise'. Additionally, in a literature where much of the focus on teachers' emotional worlds is problematised negatively as burnout, my offering primacy to the emotional world of the beginning teacher, as integral to understanding identity shaping, is a contribution to knowledge.

While remaining mindful that the concept of transferability rather than generalisability more appropriately applies to my study, theoretically-based claims emerging from my study illustrate that the complexities of teacher education necessitate that linkages are developed between all stages of the teacher education continuum. In a context where a continuous conceptualisation of teacher education has been enunciated at a policy level (Teaching Council 2011a), theoretically-derived claims emerging from my study illustrate that the fostering of actual links is a matter which demands the co-operative attention of those charged with responsibilities at all three phases of the teacher education continuum. With impending consultations concerning the implementation of the *Droichead* pilot initiative 2013-2015 in mind (Teaching Council 2013), theoretically-based claims emerging from my study

illustrate that, not least because of its boundary or liminal nature, that spirit of co-operation is especially needed in respect of the induction phase. These claims are, potentially, also of interest to those engaged in other areas of study, notably, workplace learning or, more specifically, cross-professional, early-career learning.

Methodologically, my study makes a contribution to showing how different data collection methods (i.e. interview, e-mail logs and story lines) contributed different types of information. For instance, the email logs were less rich on emotional material.

7.5 Future research directions

Teacher education, Deegan (2012) states, [is] "best regarded in its entirety as a whole or web of complex, interrelated and contingent factors" (p. 180). Equally, Tomás Ó Ruairc, Teaching Council Director, in perceiving the frequently cited 'bridging' metaphor, typically used in describing journeys across and between the phases of the teacher education continuum, as being "more like a spaghetti junction on the M50 rather than a single bridge", subscribes to a similarly complex view of teacher education (Ó Ruairc 2013b). Consistent with these perspectives and with contextual, emotional and temporo-spatial dimensions of beginning practice in mind, induction-related research should focus on unravelling those issues which complexify the lives of beginning teachers. A number of issues, worthy of investigative attention, are suggested.

The proposed *Droichead* pilot initiative relating to the induction and probation of beginners, as already outlined, is grounded in the values of professionally-led

regulation, shared professional responsibility, and collective professional confidence (Teaching Council 2013). However, as refashioning elaborated ideologies, of the kind enunciated in the *Droichead* proposals, into enacted everyday realities of implementation and consolidation, is a process fraught with uncertainty (Deegan 2012, p. 183), coherence among policy instruments and within organisational structures is necessary (Carver and Feiman-Nemser 2009). As the concept of coherence remains relatively underexplored within teacher education generally (Hammerness 2006; Grossman et al. 2008), its exploration with respect to the induction phase promises to be a generative pursuit. Specifically, with both policy making and implementation agendas in mind, induction and probationary-related processes would benefit from research which investigated how coherences of approach, on the parts of those stakeholders involved with beginning teachers, could be developed to best effect. Among issues meriting attention are how coherences between the proposed *Droichead* initiative (Teaching Council 2013) and ongoing improvements to ITE, particularly the extended and enhanced school placement of student teachers, can be fostered. More particularly, an issue which would benefit from research attention relates to dovetailing the professional development of ITE-phase co-operating teachers and induction-phase mentor teachers. In turn, desiring coherences between these school-based components of successive phases of the continuum highlights other areas of research need: firstly, the role of teacher educators, on whom much of this facilitative work would depend, remains relatively underresearched and poorly understood (Murray and Kosnik 2011) and, secondly, the absence of research-informed policies calculated to foster non-hierarchical models of partnership between various organisational entities i.e. Teaching Council; Higher Educational Institutions; Department of Education and Skills; school staffs; teacher

unions; principal networks; and the primary and post-primary strands of the National Induction Programme for Teachers.

Under proposals published as part of the primarily formative *Droichead* initiative, from the beginning of the 2015/2016 school year, the DES Inspectorate will cease direct involvement in the probation of beginners, only becoming involved if requested to do so by school authorities. Henceforth, the school principal, or a nominee, in partnership with a school-based mentor, will co-ordinate the assistance and assessment elements of induction (Teaching Council 2013). Therefore, in addition to *bridging* the ITE and induction phases of the teacher education continuum, the *Droichead* initiative also *bridges* the assistance and assessment components of the induction phase *per se.* How the two functions of assistance and assessment should be defined and implemented is, therefore, of crucial importance (Carver and Feiman-Nemser 2009). Described in terms of 'embracing contraries' (Yusko and Feiman-Nemser 2008) or 'connecting the conflicting' (McNally et al. 2008), balancing the functions of assistance and assessment represents a significant challenge (Bullough et al. 2004, p. 383). In giving active consideration to how induction procedures might dovetail with probationary processes, the Teaching Council (Teaching Council 2013) would do well to heed Tickle's finding that programmes that have sought to link probation with induction typically push beginning teachers to perform in overly prescribed ways, and conceive of teaching as a solo survival journey characterised by stress and anxiety rather than as a shared professional endeavour (2000 cited in Conway et al. 2009, p. 137).

In this respect, almost three decades ago, Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1985, p. 65) stated that without help in examining current beliefs and assumptions, teachers are likely to maintain conventional beliefs and incorporate new information or experiences into old frameworks. Equally applicable today, post 2015, rather than deemphasising the performative, time bound nature of probation, as traditionally transacted, newly proposed probationary practices may witness school principals or their nominees mimicking the pre-reform, evaluative actions of the Inspectorate. And beginners, as those in my study opined, will view the probationary-related role of principals in terms of their being direct in-house replacements for the Inspectorate. It is therefore incumbent upon the Teaching Council to remain alert to the possibility that connecting induction and mentoring with probation will legitimise those performative tendencies already strong in Irish schools. Maintaining that alertness, involves the proactive interrogation of these long-established, dominant narratives, particularly through the commissioning of research. Also deserving of research attention are attempts at establishing quite how beginners are most enlighteningly evaluated. With regard to the school-led probation of beginners, the Teaching Council has promised to issue guidelines shortly (Teaching Council 2013, p. 6). However, the production of guidelines composed of lists of teacher proficiencies, founded on technical craft knowledge (Murray 2008), would be ill-advised as narrow conceptualisations of that kind prove incapable, on their own, of capturing the complexities of beginning practice (Conway et al. 2009; McNally et al. 2010).

Moving beyond an ‘outside-led’ performative culture to a culture centred on the school-led induction, mentoring and probation of beginners, also necessitates attention being focused on the spatial and institutional characteristics of persons-in-

practice (Holland and Lave 2009, p. 2). Therefore, of particular interest to researchers in the future, arising from the introduction of school-led mentoring and probation of beginners, are changed spatial relationships and resulting dilemmas among colleagues - principals, mentors, beginners - arising from the juggling of loyalties and accountabilities in relation to different authorities (Orland-Barak 2006; Fransson 2010; Fransson and Grannäs 2013).

7.6 Concluding reflexive words

Since beginning my doctoral studies, in September 2008, the journey has been challenging but also invigorating, rewarding and beneficial; benefits accruing particularly with respect to the reconstruction of my identity. While proud of my foundational identity of having been once-a-teacher, my appointment as a lecturer in University College Cork, in 2007, instigated changes centring on my practice as a teacher educator and engagement in research. In this respect, the completion of a doctoral study contributes significantly towards my achieving enhanced credibility and recognition (Murray et al. 2011). Hence, lending credence to the ongoing, developmental nature of identity shaping, engagement in an identity authoring process of this kind modifies my positional identity within the figured worlds of academe and wider communities-of-practice (Holland et al. 1998).

As with those participating in my study, my retrospective reflections are also punctuated by high points, low points and turning points! Low points mostly relate to the degree of isolation or self-imposed exile demanded by a task of this magnitude, though the pains of exile were significantly assuaged by the enjoyment I derived from the craft of writing. High points have included all aspects of fieldwork undertaken,

and being afforded opportunities to present emerging study claims at four educational research conferences: Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI) Annual Conferences 2011 and 2012; British Educational Research Association (BERA) Annual Conference 2011; American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Conference 2012. A particular highpoint was being awarded the prestigious Dr Mary L. Thornton Scholarship in Education for 2012 by the National University of Ireland in recognition of my doctoral study. Turning points occurred during conversations with my research supervisor, Dr Paul Conway, and when conference delegates at the ESAI, BERA and AERA annual conferences actively engaged with my presentations, providing welcome feedback, both positive and 'questioning'!

In light of the *Droichead* pilot initiative 2013-2015 (Teaching Council 2013) offering a glimpse of some positive signs for induction and probation processes in the future, I plan to explore possibilities for involvement with a number of stakeholders, with a view to contributing to a range of interlinked, beginning teacher-related initiatives. These include the Teaching Council in relation to induction and probation processes; National Induction Programme for Teachers in relation to induction workshop design and the professional development of mentors; Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills in relation to schools self-evaluation of support provision for beginning teachers; Irish National Teachers' Organisation in relation to all phases of the teacher education continuum; and the Irish Primary Principals' Network in respect of leadership for teacher learning.

The next phase of my doctoral journey centres on dissemination processes. In addition to further conference submissions, I intend to submit articles for publication to a range

of peer reviewed journals. Among others, these include: *Irish Educational Studies; Teaching and Teacher Education; Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice; Teaching Education; The New Educator.* Other dissemination opportunities availed of will include submission of an overview article for publication in the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) monthly magazine, *In Touch*, and submission of a more detailed article to a specialist research publication planned by the union. The dissemination of my doctoral work facilitates a continuation of the aesthetic experience I derive from engagement in the craft of writing. In moving my writing activity from desk work to life work (Nicolini 1994, p. 60), my dissemination activities are both a function of, and contribute towards, an emerging sense of my own voice or 'grammar of authority' (Kamler and Thomson 2006). As my study progressed, I had sensed my self-confidence strengthening incrementally; my sense of 'authority' deriving mainly from the breadth of my reading, the high levels of commitment I received from the research participants, the richness of the data set and the rigour with which I approached all aspects of my doctoral work.

Adherence to the epistemological assumptions of the constructivist paradigm ensures an inescapable and necessary personal dimension to my research, drawing attention to the indissoluble interrelationship between interpreter and interpretation (Mertens 2010; Thomas and James 2006, p.782). As a consequence, issues relating to researcher identity and authorial stance are central to my doctoral study. Moreover, my text is a representation; a version of the truth that is the product of writerly choices, and it is discursive (Kamler and Thomson 2006). Consequently, I am obliged to be reflexive about my research account (Elliott 2005, p.152). Reflexivity foregrounds issues pertaining to the identity and authorial stance of the researcher;

spotlighting the role of the researcher as narrator. Spotlighting the researcher as narrator draws attention to a range of complex issues about voice, representation and interpretive authority. In constructing and interpreting others' voices and realities, I articulate a range of voices (Chase 2005, p. 657).

Firstly, my authoritative voice is evident in the adoption of a deductive approach towards data analysis; which sought to make visible and audible taken-for-granted practices, processes, and structural and cultural features characteristic of the everyday realities experienced by the beginning teacher participants in their respective workplaces. Secondly, while not idealising or angelicising participants' voices, my supportive voice is evident in the degree of latitude extended to research participants to articulate their understanding of the everyday reality of being a beginning teacher. Finally, my interactive voice foregrounds the complex interaction or intersubjectivity between researchers' and participants' voices. The adoption of an interactive voice involves me examining my interpretations and personal experiences through the refracted medium of participants' voices. As a researcher involved in a "telling" inquiry, where interviewees "tell" me of their experiences, I positioned myself within the inquiry and imagined myself more as an insider than an outsider vis-à-vis the research participants' experiences. Thus, my interactive voice is evident in the manner in which I reflect on my own beginning experiences as a newly-qualified primary teacher, and on my subsequent experiences of working with many beginning teachers, in three large primary schools, over almost three decades. In doing so, I not only provide an informing context for the narrative but also render myself vulnerable in the text and "undermine the myth of the invisible omniscient author" (Chase 2005, p. 666). As a result, I identify with Yin's (2006, p.119) view that the opportunity to

compose case studies is more exciting and calls on greater creativity than reporting about research that has been based on most other methods.

Finally, my attempt at understanding the identity shaping experiences of nine beginning teachers during the 2010/2011 school-year derives from a desire to understand the contours of the figured worlds of primary teaching, worlds which bear a remarkable resemblance to the figured worlds I encountered as a beginning teacher in 1977. By posing questions about those worlds and by proposing alternatives to present practices, my study constitutes an invitation to consider new ways of thinking about the provision of supports for beginning teachers and the development of facilitative school cultures. I actively look forward to the ongoing journey.

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